"SEEKING AND SAVING": THE REFORM OF PROSTITUTES AND THE PREVENTION OF PROSTITUTION IN BIRMINGHAM, 1860-1914

PAULA BARTLEY MA

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ABSTRACT

A number of attempts were made in Victorian and Edwardian Britain to reform individual prostitutes and to regulate, control and eliminate prostitution. This thesis examines a small number of groups which were committed to the reform of prostitutes and to the prevention of prostitution in Birmingham between 1860-1914. The first group, composed of Anglican men and women dedicated to reform, founded a Magdalen Asylum. Soon after, a group of middle class Nonconformist women inspired by Ellice Hopkins' vision, established an alternative to the Anglican model. It is argued that this initiative marked a small shift in the process of reform but did not alter it fundamentally for whatever the gender, religious commitment or class background of people on the governing committees of these organisations all attempted to train working class women for domestic service.

Preventive work was also developed by Nonconformist women and men to augment the reform institutions. In establishing different organisations to provide a moral safety net for young women, they believed that their organisations would eliminate some of the perceived causes of prostitution: immoral behaviour, unemployment, illegitimacy, homelessness and mental deficiency. This thesis focuses on the parts played by gender, class and religion in these organisations and suggests that whereas the methods employed by the preventive groups differed from the reform groups both shared a common aim of recasting working class women into modest, industrious and subordinate individuals.

This thesis argues that over-arching theories are inadequate in understanding reform and prevention and advocates an approach which is multi-dimensional. It suggests that the categorical variables of gender, class and religion, sometimes contradictory, sometimes complementary, helped shape the process of reform and prevention in Birmingham.

LIST OF ORGANISATIONS

REFORM

Magdalen Asylum

Ladies' Association for the Care of Friendless Girls

PREVENTION

Birmingham and Midland Counties' Vigilance Association

Birmingham Ladies' Association for the Care and Protection of Young Girls

Girls' Night Shelter

Agatha Stacey Homes

DATE CHART: REFORM AND PREVENTION

1758	First Magdalen hospital opened in London
1807	London Female Penitentiary established in Pentonville
1822	Magdalen Home founded in Birmingham
1840	Tait's Magdalenism: An Inquiry into the Extent, Causes and Consequences of Prostitution, published
1847	Dickens persuaded Coutts to found rescue home to be named Urania Cottage
1849	Mariquita Tennant offered asylum to prostitutes
1851	Church Penitentiary Association formed
1853	Rescue Society founded
1856	Lord Shaftesbury founded the Reformatory and Refuge Union
1857	Acton's Prostitution Considered in its Moral, Social and Sanitary Aspects in London and other Large Cities and Garrison Towns published London Female Preventive and Reformatory Institute founded
1858	Female Mission to the Fallen established
1860	Birmingham Magdalen Home moved to Clarendon Road, Edgbaston Lieut Blackmore The London by Moonlight Mission published Homes of Hope founded
1861	Age of consent fixed at 12
1864	First CDA passed
1865	Salvation Army founded, known as the Christian Mission until 1878
1866	Hopkins moves to Brighton and works with Mrs Vicars
1869	Ladies' National Association founded
1870	Second edition of Acton's book
1873	Social Purity Alliance founded
1875	Age of consent raised to 13

1876 Birmingham Rescue Society founded

1877 Melrose Cottage House of Refuge set up in Worcester

1878 Rescue Society became the Ladies' Association for the Care of Friendless Girls (LACFG) in Birmingham
Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home founded

1879 Worcester Diocesan Houses of Mercy established

1880 Industrial Schools Act allowed local authorities to remove children thought to be in moral danger from parents

1881 House of Lords Commission on Protection of Young Girls
Moral Reform Union founded

1883 Salvation Army set up first of its rescue homes in Glasgow
Church of England Purity Society founded
White Cross Army founded

1884 Summer Hill opened
Salvation Army opened rescue home in Whitechapel

1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act raised age of consent to 16
National Vigilance Association founded
Workhouse Magdalen Branch founded which became part of Birmingham Ladies' Association for the Care and Protection of Young Girls (BLACPYG)

1886 Contagious Diseases Acts repealed
Birmingham and Midland Counties' Vigilance Association inaugurated

1887 BLACPYG founded
Birmingham Union of Women Workers founded (BM NUWW)
Girls Night Shelter scheme initiated

1888 Bath House set up in Birmingham

1890 National Union of Women Workers Conference held in Birmingham

West Bromwich Workhouse, Magdalen branch founded

1891 Joint Annual Report issued by LACFG and BLACPYG

1892 Arrowfield Top (Agatha Stacey) founded in Birmingham

1895 NUWW inaugurated and BM NUWW affiliated to it

1896 Quarterly magazine BM NUWW
Domestic servants benevolent institution set up
BLACPYG underwent structural change

1897	Collapse of Moral Education Branch of BLACPYG
1898	NUWW affiliated to International Council of Women
1899	Birmingham Ladies Union became BM branch of NUWW
1905	Governing body of NUWW became National Council of Women (NCW)
1907	Snowdrop Bands of BLACPYG discontinued
1918	NUWW changed name to NCW
1920	Birmingham Magdalen Asylum changed to home for single mothers
1920's	Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home changed to home for single mothers
1940's	Agatha Stacey Homes closed
1990's	Girls' Night Shelter closed

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION AND HISTORIOGRAPHICAL REVIEW

Introduction

Prostitution caused great concern in Victorian and Edwardian Britain. Considered a 'social evil', it commanded attention from the church, the state, philanthropists, feminists and others, each of which held different perspectives on the causes of prostitution and offered a range of solutions to control, regulate and ultimately to end it.[1] This thesis is concerned with the individuals and groups who founded and managed organisations which sought to reform prostitutes and prevent prostitution in Birmingham. It will aim to integrate the empirical evidence of reform and prevention into a categorical framework of gender, class and religion. Women are still largely absent within history texts so making women visible will be a primary task.[2] This thesis will enlarge our knowledge of mixed sexed reform institutions, break new ground by offering the first empirical local study of middle class women engaged in reform and preventive work and make a contribution to the social history of Birmingham. This thesis will also argue that gender, class, religion are critical categories with which to examine the initiatives associated with the process of reform and prevention.

The development of the category of gender in the 1970's was an important breakthrough for feminist scholarship because it provides historians with the means by which to analyse relationships between women and men.[3] It is said to have first been used by American feminists who rejected the biological

determinism associated with the word 'sex'.[4] Feminist historians are indebted to the seminal work of Joan Scott who demonstrates how to use the category of gender as a tool of historical analysis.[5] Gender, Scott maintains, is not just about women but about examining women and men in relation to each other. Women and men will therefore be defined in terms of each other, as well as being defined as separate entities. Using the category of gender, it will be possible to discuss the "historical social relationships"[6] of reform and prevention and to analyse those in power rather than the powerless.[7] This thesis will therefore utilise the category of gender to analyse the motivations, beliefs and actions of the women and men who sought to reform prostitutes and prevent prostitution.

The expectation of finding a degree of unity among women that transcended class barriers was undermined by the empirical evidence which shed light on the ambiguous relationships between women (and between men and women) in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Birmingham. It will be demonstrated that gender is both "context-specific" and "context-dependent" and is not the only critical determinant.[8] On the contrary, gender leaves some central questions curiously unanswered.

Gender will therefore be just one of a number of categories which will require critical analysis. In order to measure the impact of gender on reform and prevention it will be necessary to

examine the extent to which traditional expectations are moderated within the context of a specific class, religion, locality and culture. It will be argued that class and gender systems interacted to produce specific historical experiences.[9] Class,[10] as defined by relation to the means of production, life-style, self-identity and ideology, will be seen to be an important determinant for women[11] as for men.[12] This thesis will be concerned with the beliefs, motivations and charitable work of the (largely middle class) men and women who managed organisations which sought to reform prostitutes and prevent prostitution in Birmingham.[13] It will concentrate on the middle class people who were involved in this process rather than the women they reformed.[14] This emphasis is taken partly because any voices remaining of working class women have been refracted through a middle class lens, and partly because the emphasis reveals some of the tensions and ambiguities between women. This thesis will therefore concern itself almost exclusively with middle class perceptions of the working class.[15]

This thesis will utilise religion as an analytical category with which to understand the motivations and practice of the philanthropists who were engaged in the reform of prostitutes and the prevention of prostitution. It will also demonstrate the importance of locality. There were two distinct religious Christian Evangelical[16] groups within Birmingham, the Church of England and Nonconformists.[17] Although the Church of England was numerically powerful[18] it did not have as great an influence on social reform as the Nonconformists. Indeed, Birmingham was a

centre of a rather special brand of Nonconformity which promoted the civic gospel, a gospel which for most historians, was a masculine pursuit.[19] Women, are rarely, if ever, mentioned in the historiography of the civic gospel and indeed of Birmingham, although they played a crucial role in the development of the city.[20] This thesis will thus add to our understanding of Birmingham history by showing that the civic gospel had a significant female dimension.

Finally, some of the debate about preventive work will be shown to have taken place within a particular framework of 'race'. This thesis will argue that eugenic fears about the decline of the British Empire led to the regulation of the 'feeble-minded' in an attempt to curb prostitution.

This thesis will not advocate a single model of historical causation, continuity and motivation but offer one which is multi-dimensional. It will argue that it is erroneous to view the categories of gender, class and religion either homogeneously or hierarchically as, seen together, they were part of a complex web of competing power relationships which helped shape the process of moral reform and prevention in Birmingham. It will demonstrate a "multi-layered"[21] and a nuanced approach to the ways in which middle class women and men constructed a vision of both themselves and working class women in their aim of reforming prostitutes and preventing prostitution.

In contrast to the well defined theoretical framework outlined

above, the elusive and fragmentary nature of the sources makes for a methodological eclecticism. The tension between the two polarities of empiricism and theory, of course, is one which is keenly addressed and debated by historians.[22] This thesis will adopt a theoretical perspective which is derived from feminist historiography and a methodology based on the piecing together of often disparate sources which will be discussed below.

It is recognised that sources for women's history are usually not easily identifiable[23] and only gradually could the narrative of reform and preventive work in Birmingham be pieced together. For much of the time women's sources are scarce because of the ordinariness of their lives rather than because they were women, and the lack of written evidence by the working class female inmates of the various institutions has probably more to do with their class than with their gender.

This thesis is based on a variety of evidence which, like most sources, needs careful evaluation. For example, there are a number of problems associated with using Annual Reports as evidence. They are written from the perspective of the managers, provide only a summary of a year's work and have a tendency to eulogise success and underplay failure. Nevertheless, they have proved useful in a number of ways. They present an overview of each organisation's structure and name the managers, their addresses and the length of time the managers served on Committees. Thus it is possible to build up a picture of the people who managed each organisation. For example, lists of

members and subscribers in the Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage Annual Reports provide information on the extent of suffrage support within Nonconformist organisations. Annual Reports also provide an account of what happened and, because the organisations were perceived through the eyes of their managers, they provide "unwitting testimony"[24] to their taken-for-granted values. However, the Annual Reports vary. Some, such as the Magdalen Asylum and the Agatha Stacey Homes, display their philosophy on every page. Others are more circumspect, making it difficult to tease out their underlying beliefs. Finally, Annual Reports only hint at the lives and responses of the young women they hoped to rescue and reform. For instance, the more "witting testimony"[25] of the numbers of those who absconded from the institutions "unwittingly" tell the reader that many resisted the attempts to impose a moral orthodoxy.

Newspaper reports and journal articles help flesh out the skeletal frame of the Annual Reports. For the most part, they reinforce the substance of the Annual Reports. In addition the Birmingham Post and the Birmingham Gazette duplicate each other's accounts indicating that these stories had probably been syndicated. However, sometimes these newspapers print in full a revealing speech made by one of the Committee members. Specialist journals such as the NUWW Quarterly Magazine, the Edgbastonia, the Englishwoman's Review, and the National Vigilance Record prove invaluable in providing in-depth coverage of issues and individuals - even though (or because) each holds

its own political perspective and tends to overestimate the success of the individuals concerned.

Conference reports, Parliamentary papers, addresses and speeches supplement the Annual Reports and press coverage. NUWW Conference Reports and the Midland Poor Law Conference Reports are particularly useful because speeches are printed in full. When Nonconformist women, such as Ellen Pinsent, give evidence to Government Commissions, it helps piece together the attitudes, values and assumptions held by such women. Unfortunately the women and men of the Magdalen Asylum seem not to be so influential outside their own religious world so that no record has been found of their contribution to moral reform politics other than Annual Reports and newspaper accounts.

Various private documents and published autobiographies also prove useful. Letters help to confirm that individual women knew, and were related to each other. Although the personal diaries of Elizabeth Taylor Cadbury are disappointing, more of an appointment book than a personal account, they are still helpful in conveying the impression of an extremely busy person involved in a myriad of charitable organisations. Similarly, the published autobiography of Anna Lloyd proves useful in illustrating the difficulties faced by women Poor Law Guardians who worked with single mothers. Its weakness lies in the fact that it was written long after the event.

Prison Visiting Committee Minutes and Workhouse Infirmary Minutes

have been consulted to see whether or not the services of the women were welcomed. Unfortunately, women's charitable work is not given high priority - women visitors are mentioned but only to be dismissed in one sentence by the respective Committee who record either a vote of thanks or report the resignation or appointment of a female visitor. Together, all the sources outlined above, provide the base on which to analyse the reform and prevention movement in Birmingham.

A schematic framework will be adopted in this thesis, partly because such an approach facilitates an examination of the differences between single sex and mixed sex organisations and partly because each organisation targeted a different group of women. It would have proved difficult to analyse the various groups and organisations in any other way. For although the organisations often shared a common purpose and a common philosophy, the means by which these were achieved differed considerably.

Part One will seek to place the thesis within the historical context of reform and prevention. It will demonstrate that historians of reform and prevention, writing in the 1970's, usually present their work empirically - and often uncritically - rather than theoretically. It will argue that, by the 1980's two theoretical polarities become evident: radical feminism and socialist feminism. Whereas radical feminists tend to favour the primacy of gender, socialist feminists, it will be demonstrated,

tend to prefer to view the category of class as the ultimate determinant. By the 1990's, these two positions are bridged by a new eclecticism which draws on a variety of theoretical frameworks.

Part Two will examine the motivation and work of the people who founded and managed the reform and preventive organisations in Birmingham, and will try to reconstruct the fabric of their lives. It will show that three distinct, but unequal, groups emerged. The first consisted of Anglican Conservative men and women who managed the Magdalen Asylum; the second, Nonconformist Liberal women who managed a group of women only reform and preventive organisations[26]; the third, Nonconformist Liberal men and women who founded the Birmingham and Midland Counties' Vigilance Association.

The main conceptual thrust of Part Two will be an assessment of the dynamics of gender, class and religion in relation to the expectations, motivations and subsequent practice of the reform and preventive movement in Birmingham. It will demonstrate that both women and men were prompted by a number of factors to engage in charitable work but that they did not participate on equal terms. For whatever their religious denomination, women tended to assume a subordinate role in mixed organisations; where men took control, the more patrician the individual man the less practical work he tended to do. This part will also illustrate that while women held managerial positions in women only groups, their charitable work was circumscribed by the gender specific

class ideology in which they operated. In some ways, it will be argued, middle class Nonconformist women challenged gender stereotypes by acting in a public capacity but it was a threat contained within well regulated patriarchal parameters. Finally, it will establish that unity between women was undermined by religion. There was little or no female unity between Nonconformist and Anglican women. Indeed Nonconformist and Anglican women shared more in common with their menfolk than with each other.

An attempt will be made in Part Three to demonstrate where and why Birmingham conformed to, and diverged from, the national pattern of reform. It will focus on two different institutions in Birmingham, namely the Magdalen Asylum and Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home. These two institutions will present a comparative case study of the process of moral reform and will offer a corrective to the picture of reform institutions advanced by other writers. The mixed sex Magdalen Asylum will be used as a foil with which to understand the female run Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home. In so doing, critical questions will be raised about the relationship between gender, class and religion - the key categories which will be employed to analyse the similarities and differences between the institutions. It will be shown that whereas both were largely middle class institutions aiming to create domestic servants out of working class women, the means by which this was achieved differed sharply. The Magdalen Asylum's punitive approach, it will be demonstrated, contrasted with the allegedly congenial atmosphere of Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home. Whether this

distinction was mainly due to gender or religion will remain uncertain but it does reflect the ways in which class was mediated by such categories. Furthermore, these case studies aim to demonstrate that unity between women was problematic. Middle class women showed no signs of collaborating in reform work, divided as they were by religious and political beliefs. Similarly the class divisions between (middle class) Committee members and (working class) inmates precluded any potential for female solidarity. By the 1880's, it will be argued, reform was viewed as inadequate because it merely reacted to the problem of prostitution rather than eliminating its causes.

Prevention, it was believed, was better than cure. Thus the final Part of the thesis will investigate four preventive organisations in Birmingham, namely the Birmingham and Midland Counties' Vigilance Association, the Birmingham Ladies' Association for the Care and Protection of Young Girls, the Girls' Night Shelter and the Agatha Stacey Homes. It will be shown that these organisations, whether mixed or single sex attempted to block what was perceived as the 'slippery slope' to prostitution. Collectively, they founded shelters for the homeless, training homes for 'wayward' girls and the 'feeble-minded', set up groups to teach moral values, prosecuted sexual offenders and campaigned to change the law. It will be established that the women and men in these groups shared a middle class Nonconformist background framed within a similar political ideology. This part will therefore provide a unique opportunity to test out the

category of gender against those of class, religion and, at times, 'race'. It will also demonstrate the contradictory nature of moral reform in Birmingham. At one and the same time working class women perceived to be in sexual danger were offered protection and repression, assistance and control and opportunities and restraint. Such support, mounted within a middle class picture as much as a feminist one, weakened any potential unity between women.

Part Five will briefly summarise the main arguments of the thesis. In particular the usefulness of the category of gender in understanding reform and prevention will be reiterated. It will conclude that gender cannot be usefully employed outside a class, religious and cultural context. In addition, over-arching theories, be they of gender or class, will be found to be inadequate categories because they do not reflect the complexities of shifting alliances.

Notes and references

(1) The Contagious Diseases Acts (1864-1886) were an example of the state regulation of prostitution. The Contagious Diseases Acts did not apply to Birmingham although a few Nonconformists helped in the campaigns to abolish them. There is a considerable literature on the Contagious Diseases Acts. See, for example, J L'Esperance, "The Work of the Ladies' National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act", Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History, Spring, 1973; P McHugh, Prostitution and Victorian Social Reform, Croom Helm, 1980; F B Smith, "Ethics and Disease in the Later Nineteenth Century: The Contagious Diseases Acts", Historical Studies, October, 1971; and J Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society, Cambridge University Press, 1980.

(2) One of the most exciting developments within history has been the growth of women's history. This process began quite modestly fostered by the growth of the women's liberation movement in the

1970's and new directions in social history. There are three, broad, interlocking, strands within women's history - women's history, feminist history and gender history - and this thesis will utilise all of them. See J Rendall, '"Uneven Developments': Women's History, Feminist History and Gender History in Great Britain", in K Offen, R R Pierson and Jane Rendall, Writing Women's History, Macmillan, 1991 for a critique of the development of, and the different strands in, women's history; E Fox-Genovese, "Placing Women's History in History", New Left Review, Volume 12, 1972 for an historiographical overview of women's history; J Bennett "Women's History: A study in continuity and change", Women's History Review, Number 2, 1993 for a radical feminist plea for the continuance of the use of patriarchy in women's history; and various contributors in History Today, June, 1985 provide an illustration of the different perspectives within women's history.

(3) See S O Rose, "Gender History/Women's History: Is Feminist Scholarship Losing its Critical Edge?", Journal of Women's History, Spring, 1993 for a critical overview of the development of the category of gender. See also The Polity Reader in Gender Studies, Polity, 1994.

(4) See J W Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" in J W Scott, Gender and the Politics of History, Columbia University Press, 1988.

(5) See J W Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis", 1988.

(6) J Rendall, "Uneven Developments", 1991, p50.

(7) See L Davidoff and C Hall, Family Fortunes, Hutchinson, 1987, p29. The category of gender, however, has been subjected to fierce criticism. See A Clark, "Comment", Journal of Women's History", Spring, 1993, pp115-118 for a discussion of gender in relation to power and for a critique of post-modernist interpretations of gender, especially in relation to post-modernists supposedly apolitical stance. J Hoff, "Gender as a Postmodern Category of Paralysis", Women's Studies International Forum, Volume 17, 1994, pp443-447 is particularly critical of the way in which post-modernists have depoliticised the category of gender. See also J Bennett, "Feminism and History", Gender and History, Autumn, 1989 pp251-267 for a discussion of the use of the category of patriarchy as a tool of historical analysis.

(8) See G Bock, "Women's History and Gender History: Aspects of an International Debate", Gender and History, Spring, 1989 for a further discussion.

(9) See J Kelly, "The Doubled Vision of Feminist Theory", J L Newton, Mary P Ryan and J R Walkowitz, in Sex and Class in Women's History, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983, pp259-268.

Kelly's work offers an alternative to 'foundationalist' theories and provides an important overview of the debates between Marxist feminists and radical feminists. Nonetheless Kelly's work still rests within a traditional Marxist framework and has a tendency to favour economic determinants.

(10) L Davidoff and C Hall, Family Fortunes, 1987, p30 emphasise the importance of going beyond a reductionist approach to class to one based on "moral and cultural authority". See also R J Morris, Class, Sect and Party, Manchester University Press, 1990, pp1-19.

(11) L Davidoff and C Hall, Family Fortunes, 1987, p29 have shown that whereas women tend to be defined by gender, men are defined by class. This thesis will attempt to show how women were both constrained and liberated by their class position.

(12) See J Benson, The Rise of Consumer Society in Britain, 1880-1980, Longman, 1994, p33 which defines the middle class "as those who derived their wealth and income primarily from the ownership of property other than land, and from their employment in non-manual labour".

(13) The majority of feminist historians have been concerned with the oppressed of history. L Davidoff and C Hall's work, Family Fortunes, 1987 marks a major breakthrough in this respect. Family Fortunes describes and analyses the formation of the middle class in Birmingham and Essex.

(14) See W D Rubinstein, "The Victorian Middle Classes: Wealth, Occupation and Geography", Economic History Review, 1977. Rubinstein criticises the assumption that the nineteenth century middle class was largely that of industrialists and manufacturers and shows that the composition of the middle class was far more complex.

(15) Middle class perceptions of the working class of course are subjective but it is the middle class perspective with which this thesis is concerned.

(16) See G Best, "Evangelicalism and the Victorians", in A Symondson, The Victorian Crisis, SPCK, 1970 for a discussion of the philosophical beliefs and influence of the Evangelicals.

(17) See R Peacock, "The 1892 Birmingham Religious Census", in A Bryman, Religion in the Birmingham Area, 1975 for details of the religious breakdown of Birmingham.

(18) See R Peacock, "The 1892 Birmingham Religious Census", 1975.

(19) See G Parsons, Religion in Victorian Britain, Manchester University Press, 1988, A Briggs, Victorian Cities, Odhams, 1963 and E P Hennock, Fit and Proper Persons, Edward Arnold, 1973 for a discussion of the importance of the civic gospel in Birmingham from a male perspective.

(20) Indeed, women are rarely mentioned in most histories of Birmingham but there are exceptions. C Chinn, They Worked All their Lives, Manchester University Press, 1988, L Davidoff and C Hall, Family Fortunes, 1987 and C Midgeley, Women Against Slavery, Routledge, 1992, all provide an antidote to this masculine hegemony by charting the ways in which women participated in the world of work, influenced the business world and the civil rights politics of Birmingham. C Chinn's emphasis is on women of the urban poor, Davidoff and Hall demonstrate how Quaker women played a signficant role in the economic formation of the city whereas Midgeley analyses women's political participation in the anti-slavery campaigns. Each of these books illustrates the important role played by women in the formation and development of Birmingham but to date there is still no record of women's role in the civic gospel.

(21) See C Smart, Regulating Womanhood, Routledge, 1992, p15.

(22) For a recent example of the debates between historians with regard to the relationship between theory and practice see the conference papers at the Social History Society Conference, York, January, 1995.

(23) See D Beddoe, Discovering Women's History, Pandora, 1983.

(24) Marwick makes a useful distinction between "witting" and "unwitting" testimony which undermines the criticism of some post-modernists that history is little more than narrative based on an unproblematic study of sources. (A Marwick, The Nature of History, Macmillan, 1991 edition, pp216-220.)

(25) See A Marwick, The Nature of History, 1991, pp216-220.

(26) Often the same women managed both reform and preventive organisations.

Chapter One: Historiographical Review of Reform and Prevention

Fears that prostitution would infect the respectable world, destroy marriages, the home, the family and ultimately the nation led to attempts to reform prostitutes and prevent prostitution. The first aim of this chapter will be to contextualise reform and prevention historically by describing the chronology and nature of the institutions and organisations which proliferated in this period: an area in which historians agree. The second aim will be to offer a critique of the historiography associated with reform and prevention. This chapter will demonstrate that there are a variety of perspectives on the reform of prostitutes and the prevention of prostitution which, to a large extent, relate to a religious and/or political ideology. The third aim will be to demonstrate briefly how this thesis will contribute to the historiography of reform and prevention.

a) reform work

Historians agree that the penitentiary system of reform was the hallmark of late 18th and 19th century England.[1] In the 1850's an alternative system of reform was advocated and 'Homes', rather than penitentiaries, were built to accommodate rescued prostitutes. This section of the chapter will assess the similarities and differences between historians' views of the various institutions built in Britain in the 19th century. First the agreements between historians will be charted. This will be followed by an analysis of the historical controversy surrounding the various types of institutions set up: Anglican institutions

which were managed by women and men; Anglican and Catholic institutions managed by women; and finally Nonconformist homes which were managed by women and men.

Penitentiaries, asylums and homes can be considered as part of a Christian 'archipelago' of reform which stretched all over the British Isles.[2] The first penitentiary was opened in London in 1758 and accepted all women except those who were black. Its 'success' - alongside developments in social welfare policies - led to the establishment of other institutions. In 1807 the London Female Penitentiary was established at Pentonville.[3] In 1849 Mariquita Tennant offered asylum to prostitutes at the Clewer House of Mercy near Windsor which was later extended by the sisters of St John the Baptist.[4] Others followed suit. The Church Penitentiary Association was established in 1852 to co-ordinate and promote this reform movement.[5] Scotland and Ireland also favoured the penitential system and built similar institutions as those in England.[6] Penitentiaries were criticised by Evangelicals who shifted the emphasis of reform from punishment to pity and built smaller Homes in place of larger institutions. In 1853 the Rescue Society was formed, followed by the London Female Preventive and Reformatory Institute in 1857 and the Homes of Hope in 1860.[7] Evangelicals formed their own coordinating society in 1856: the Reformatory and Refuge Union. Similarly the Salvation Army and the Church Army opened up homes.[8] By the end of the nineteenth century Bristow estimated that there were over 300 such establishments catering for the reform of about six thousand women a year.[9]

Historians also agree that penitentiaries and asylums shared much in common, whatever their geographical location, their religious foundations or the gender composition of their managers. Selection criteria and procedures were broadly similar. Most targeted young working class women under the age of 30 who had formerly been domestic servants.[10] The women who entered the institutions tended to be without friends or family. Once accepted they were compelled to stay for at least two years, had their hair cropped and wore a special regulatory uniform which was quickly identifiable.[11] People in York, for instance, easily recognised penitentiary inmates by their grey cloaks and bonnets.[12]

Freedom, it is argued, was curtailed in all institutions. Inmates were forbidden to go out alone and were either denied contact with friends or family or only allowed to see them at strictly regulated intervals. Letters were inspected by Matrons. At the end of each day inmates were shut away in dormitories where beds were often packed close together.[13] Discipline was strict. As in the factories and workhouses of the day there were many rules and regulations. Snuff, swearing, and fighting were banned. In the home at Clewer, near Windsor, inmates were taught to bow low before the sisters and to speak only when spoken to.[14]

Historians acknowledge that in order to keep discipline and the institution financially viable, all inmates had to work.[15]

Occupations in such institutions ranged from weaving carpets, making lace and toys, gloves and artificial flowers but most inmates worked in the laundry.[16] In York the Assistant Matron taught the inmates how to wash, starch and iron in order for them to become laundry maids in the outside world.[17] In most other institutions, however, 'fallen' women were expected to become domestic servants.[18] Laundry work helped cut the cost of food, clothing and confinement. Charitable donations contributed about two thirds towards the cost of these institutions so laundry work was often an important part of the annual revenue.[19] Eton, for example, paid the Clewer House of Mercy £270 per annum to wash the house-hold linen and personal laundry of 70 boys.[20] Even so, many institutions faced economic difficulties. Annual reports of York indicate that penitentiaries were often in constant financial trouble trying to balance their precarious budget.[21]

Historians claim that - regardless of religious affiliation and gender composition - many of the homes had difficulty in coping with the inmates who quarrelled with each other, refused to work, stole, told lies and were rude to the Matrons.[22] Inmates often wanted to leave but it was not always easy to do so; they were interviewed by the Matron and frequently put in solitary confinement to think it over.[23] Rather than submit to this treatment many ran way. Inmates at York, Glasgow and Windsor squeezed themselves through windows to escape over walls to the street below.[24] Those who dared to run away were sometimes charged with theft of the uniform and sentenced to periods of imprisonment.[25]

Heasman[26] is perhaps the only historian to mention other types of institutions which were systematically set up to reform prostitutes.[27] Heasman suggests that penitentiaries were heavily criticised by contemporaries for their punitive ideology and practice, and that in their place, Evangelical homes were built which were more congenial than penitentiaries because they were based on a view of the prostitute as victim rather than sinner.[28]

Although historians have tended to agree about the nature of the various organisations set up to reform prostitutes they have tended to disagree as to why they were set up, their aims and objectives and the motivation of those involved in reform. To enter this debate about reform work is to enter an interpretive labyrinth. Church historians maintain that reform work benefited women because it extricated prostitutes from the terror of nineteenth century streets. Reformers, it is alleged, were motivated by humanitarian concerns to save the sinner's soul from eternal damnation.[29] In contrast, socialist feminists tend to claim that rescue work was little more than a capitalist male conspiracy to ensure a viable workforce for the emerging middle class and to instil bourgeois values into the fallen women. It is even suggested that reform was a none too subtle conspiracy whereby the state, the government and the philanthropist colluded to protect the country from moral disintegration.[30] On the other hand, radical feminist historians[31] tend to stress the unity rather than the discord between the reforming and the reformed.

Using this historiographical framework, the organisations managed by mixed gender groups will be analysed. This will be followed by an evaluation of women only organisations.

The church historians, Hall and Howe,[32] examine organisations managed by women and men and place reform work within the context of the Church of England's social work. Although only one chapter of their book deals with reform work - which naturally results in a rather sketchy portrayal - the authors offer an important contribution to historical knowledge by showing the inter-relationship between reform and religious doctrine. In their book, Hall and Howe trace the progress of Church of England social work from its beginnings to the 1950's but offer a rather Whiggish interpretation of its development. Reform work is seen as the forerunner of modern welfare systems and as a step on the ladder of progress. Furthermore, the historical analysis is mediated by a wish to present the work of the modern church in a positive light. This, combined with a doctrinaire, Christian perspective, seems to encourage the authors to defend the harsh nature of penitentiaries. Strict discipline is thus condoned because it was religiously inspired and based upon compassion and love. In fact, Hall and Howe believe that the reformers' genuine desire to help unfortunate women to return to respectable society justified the methods used.

Conversely, Finnegan's study is more critical of penitentiaries

than the former authors. She devotes one chapter, in a book on prostitutes and prostitution in York, to reform.[33] It is based on well marshalled primary evidence and offers a major contribution to the literature on reform work. In her book, Finnegan emphasises the punitive aspects of the home with its regulatory uniforms, harsh discipline and domestic service training but does not really analyse why this may have been so. Indeed, Finnegan prefers to describe events rather than assess them. For example, York penitentiary was originally managed by an interdenominational group of Nonconformists and Anglicans but as the century progressed the Quakers withdrew their support but no reasons are suggested for this break.[34] However, this may be because Finnegan's concern lies with the prostitutes and their treatment rather than with the women and men who managed the institution.

Mahood argues that Finnegan's work "typifies the oppression model"[35] because Finnegan regards the prostitutes as passive victims of male oppression, ground down by poverty and despair. However this is not a fair appraisal as Finnegan describes in quite some detail the rebellious inmates who subject the Matrons, the laundresses and the ladies to constant abuse and harassment.[36] Rather than viewing the women as passive recipients of reform, Finnegan shows them as being troublesome, rude and insolent - hardly the demure victims that Mahood sees Finnegan as portraying. A much fairer criticism would be its absence of theory in that its emphasis on empirical research tends to give a

rather descriptive tone to the book, an approach which contrasts sharply with the work of feminist historians.

Mahood's work provides a refreshing alternative to previous religiously inspired and empirically based studies.[37] According to Mahood, her work rests within a theoretical framework underpinned by Foucauldian discourse, social control theories and feminist historiography.[38] This conceptual framework is used to construct the first ever detailed history of reform institutions in Glasgow and Edinburgh. To a large extent Mahood breaks new ground by focussing on the 'gendering' of the reform process. Penitentiaries, Mahood argues, produced a gendered regime in which female proletarians were encouraged to take up quite distinctive positions in society. Such institutions "served two social control functions directly: sexual control and vocational control".[39] Magdalene asylums were designed to socialise women into the social and sexual mores of the middle class as well as to create an industrial work force of domestic servants. Mahood also provides insights into the ways in which laundry work prepared women for a life of subservience.[40] Because discipline, order and punishment were the key to its success inmates were well regulated. Mahood, however, rejects a 'victim' approach but stresses the ways in which inmates rebelled against the imposition of bourgeois values.[41]

However, there are a number of weaknesses in her analysis. Firstly, Mahood unduly criticises the Directors of the Magdalene asylums for equipping inmates with laundry skills and sending

them into domestic service.[42] Magdalene asylums did not create domestic service - it was the largest single occupation for women in the nineteenth century.[43] Job opportunities were limited, not because of the asylums, but because of a number of different factors. Lack of education, protective legislation, the expansion of male trade unions combined with the growth of a domestic ideology all played some part in reinforcing women's low status in the employment market.[44] In preparing women as domestic servants the directors of these institutions were only being realistic about women's occupational choice: their aim was to transform women not society.

Secondly, although Mahood adds to our understanding of the ways in which police used their powers to persuade prostitutes to enter penitentiaries rather than face prosecution she offers her reader a conspiracy model of social control. Local government representatives and philanthropists, she claims, colluded to establish an apparatus for social control which provided an alternative to state legislation.[45] In Glasgow, this coalition of doctors, police officials, businessmen and reformers led to an effective control of prostitutes and prostitution within the city. Once charged with soliciting, women were either sent to the Lock hospital for medical treatment or the Magdalene for moral rehabilitation. This analysis is problematic. It is hard to credit that such disparate groups of the bourgeoisie, operating from very different presumptions, joined together, wittingly, to instil their codes of morality into unsuspecting working class

them as an homogeneous entity is likely to distort their intentions. Some may well have operated from humanitarian reasons rather than social control ones: they were after all avoiding sending to prison prostitutes found guilty of soliciting. In addition, as Stedman Jones argues, the notion of social control "suggests a static metaphor of equilibrium".[46]

Thirdly, the notion that the bourgeoisie attempted to manipulate the working class woman to absorb middle class sexual and cultural values is a very rigid Althusserian model whereby the ideological superstructure of domesticity, in the last analysis, is dictated by the economic necessity of servitude. This theory has been criticised by historians both on the right and the left of the political spectrum[47] because it places the working class - or working class women - at the receiving end of a dominant culture and allows little possibility of women creating their own customs and values. Mahood may reject the victim approach but her model, in the end, remains a one way transmission model which sees working class women as (albeit none too passive) recipients of middle class mores.

Fourthly, although Mahood criticises the oppression model offered by Finnegan, Mahood argues in a similar way in relation to the middle class women involved in reform work. Whereas working class women refused to conform to role expectations, according to Mahood, middle class women are seen to accept their inferior status as women because they identified with a class

rather than a gender position.[48] Middle class women, therefore, are regarded by Mahood as having no mind of their own but as acting as agents of masculine social control. Like the police, middle class women are seen to be part of the repressive state apparatus.[49] Despite Mahood's gender perspective, class politics retain supremacy as middle class women allegedly colluded with middle class men in trying to maintain patriarchal models of sexuality. Consequently, Mahood confirms the ascendancy of the economic and the primacy of class while diminishing the centrality of female oppression and exploitation. Like most socialist feminists, the theoretical basis of women's oppression is, in the last analysis, posited within patriarchal capitalism. Class, not gender, remains the dominant explanation. The result of this is to weaken the feminist argument at the expense of the socialist and to eulogise the working class prostitute at the expense of the middle class reformer. Working class women were thus categorised, rescued and recast by bourgeois men in collaboration with middle class women. Nowhere does Mahood suggest that there was any unity between women - the only unity was that of class.

The major weakness of Mahood's analysis stems from her insistence on developing a theoretical construct which draws from too many disparate discourses yet, paradoxically, ignores a significant area of debate. Although it is dominated by socialist feminism, it remains a very eclectic theory borrowed from Foucault, socialist and functionalist notions of social control and

concepts of gender put forward by feminist historians. Religion, a powerful motivating force in nineteenth century Britain, is left unexplored.

Bonham's, privately published, book offers an empirical study of an all female English institution - the Clewer House of Mercy. Part of a trilogy on the history of the sisters of St John the Baptist, it provides an in-depth narrative of a penitentiary run by nuns.[50] Bonham's use of the extensive records at Clewer enables her to paint a detailed picture of penitentiary life which enriches our understanding of the religious nature of these types of institutions. What is striking about her research is the similarity it reveals between institutions run by men and those run by women. Unfortunately, Bonham's analysis is flawed by her religious conviction and by her hagiographical rather than critical approach to the history of Clewer. Consequently, the reform work of the Sisters of St John the Baptist is eulogised. Bonham's tone is more apologetic than that of Hall and Howes,[51] though, like them, she justifies the punitive regime of such institutions. For instance, Bonham excuses the wearing of uniforms because - as each inmate wore the same colour - it made for equal treatment. Furthermore, Bonham argues, the uniforms were probably made of better material than the usual dress of the inmates.[52] However, this is not the root of Bonham's weakness. In neglecting to use the categories of gender and class to illuminate her study, Bonham misses the opportunity to reflect upon the problematics of reform work.

On the other hand, Vicinus[53] provides an alternative analysis of the House of Clewer. In a study of single women of the nineteenth century, she devotes one chapter to the variety of religious orders founded by women, some of which, like the Sisters of St John, attempted to reform prostitutes. As an American radical feminist, Vicinus tends to place her work within a patriarchal as opposed to a religious context like Bonham. The gender of the management structure is thus seen to be of critical importance. Consequently, Vicinus stresses the similarities between the reformers and the reformed. The nun and the penitent shared much in common. Both wore a uniform, sported a short haircut, and had a distinct lack of personal belongings. Both were isolated from the real world. Convents were total institutions whose high walls were a physical manifestation of a mental and spiritual severance. Both endured a daily discipline reinforced through food, prayer and work.[54] Such a strict regime remolded both their identities to fit the patriarchal mores of the period.

Vicinus is too sophisticated a radical feminist to suggest that total unity existed between nuns and penitents. On the contrary, she is critical of the Anglican sisters' penitentiary because it remained tied to the traditional male hierarchy of the Anglican church and thus tended to be influenced by patriarchal values. Because the attitudes of the nuns towards sexuality harmonised with High Church views, they offered a similar punitive regime as those institutions with men in control.[55] In addition, Vicinus refers to the class structure of Clewer which tended to recruit

women from upper and middle class wealthy families. For instance, Harriet Monsell, the founder of the Community of St John the Baptist, was well known in high church upper class circles.[56] This division, she claims, encouraged a subservient attitude from the working class penitent who tended to look up to nuns from a higher social class.

The research outlined above emphasises reform which took place within an Anglican context. Luddy's[57] work charts the Catholic institutions set up in Ireland to reform 'fallen' women. However, the difference in geographical location and religious conviction produced little or no change in the methods of reform. The English and Scottish style of penitential system was preferred by the Irish laity and religious alike. Luddy provides fascinating insights into the daily lives of the Catholic inmates. One penitentiary, for example, which insisted on stripping the inmates of their former identities, numbered and called them Mrs One, Mrs Two, Mrs Three and so on.[58] To her credit, Luddy places her work within an implicit gendered context which enables her to comment on the problems associated with reform. However, some of her deductions about the shared world of the nun and the penitent echo Vicinus's.

All the organisations mentioned above, whatever their gender composition or religious affiliation, shared much in common. These institutions were criticised by nineteenth century contemporaries who set up alternative organisations. In one chapter of a book on Evangelical social reform, Heasman outlines

other options on offer to the penitentiary system and is perhaps the first historian to indicate that the reform movement had separate strands. Evangelical homes, Heasman claims, marked a sharp contrast to the earlier penitentiaries in that they were more congenial, lenient and friendly.[59] Unlike most of the previous authors, Heasman acknowledges the impact of the women's movement on reform work in the second half of the nineteenth century.[60] Single women, she maintains, provided the much needed workforce to implement moral reform but makes no reference to their influence on its nature. According to Heasman, homes were established because of evangelical religious pressures rather than feminist ones. Consequently, the weakness of her analysis is similar to that of Hall and Howes and Bonham because all function within the same religious terms of reference. Although Heasman is critical of High Church Anglican penitentiaries, she does not examine Evangelical institutions in the same discriminating way.[61]

To a great extent, Cohen[62] provides a natural conclusion to this section of the historiographical overview for she breaks new ground in revising the history of reform institutions. Her argument centres on how refuges of the early modern period acted as prototypes for other female institutions ranging from women's housing projects to battered women's shelters. From a narrow empirical Italian base Cohen makes connections between different types of female institutions across the world and across the centuries. In painting on such a wide canvas Cohen offers

interesting insights into how women's sexuality has been controlled over the centuries. In her view the 'archipelago' of reform encompassed almost every institution set up to assist women. This is the book's greatest weakness. Cohen's ahistorical approach forges weak links between institutions in differing geographical locations, with different aims and objectives and across wide spaces of historical time. Much of her empirical work concentrates on the Italian cities of Florence and Pistoia where Catholicism informed the creation and organisation of asylums. The pattern in England was quite different. Cohen's empirical work is excellent but her theory is ultimately unsatisfactory because it draws too wide a conclusion from too narrow a factual base.

One is led to believe from the accounts above that women made little difference to the chosen methods of any institution. Whether penitentiaries were managed by men or managed by women - in Scotland or in England - they remained punitive institutions whose aim was to reform fallen women into respectable citizens. In contrast, there seemed to be great differences between Evangelical Homes and Anglican and Catholic penitentiaries which suggests that the methods of reform changed because of religious pressures rather than feminist ones.

Research on reform, however, is based on the military town of Windsor, the cathedral city of York, the largely Presbyterian cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh and the Catholic country of Ireland. This thesis will add to the knowledge of British reform

institutions by discussing two Birmingham institutions. It will offer a different interpretative model than that used by other historians of reform. Historians, it has been shown, have used a variety of theoretical frameworks with which to understand reform institutions. Those who have focussed on religious motivations have tended to neglect gender and class. In contrast, historians who have examined the importance of gender and class have tended to ignore, or seriously underplay, religious influences. It is the aim of this thesis to draw upon the work of previous scholarship but to demonstrate that the categories of gender, class and religion are all important relational variables in the process of moral reform. Reform, however, was criticised because of its inability to end prostitution. In its place other measures were advocated.

b) prevention work

Prevention was seen to be better than cure. Hundreds of different, disparate societies were formed to protect young women by preventing immorality. These various groups are not easy to categorise but all had common aims: promoting social purity, curbing sexual incontinence, stopping the sexual abuse of young girls, and encouraging male respect for women. Two of these preventive organisations, namely the Ladies' Associations for the Care of Friendless Girls (LACFG) and the National Vigilance Association,(NVA) will be analysed in this section as they form the basis of this thesis. To date, there has been little empirical research on the NVA and even less on the LACFGs so this

thesis will make a significant contribution to the knowledge of preventive work. Historians who have written about prevention tend to agree over the nature of the preventive organisations but tend to disagree, as with the reform organisations, over why they were set up and the motivations of the people who managed them. The historiography of prevention falls into three main areas, namely historians who adopt a narrative style, those who embrace a radical feminist perspective and lastly those who subscribe to a socialist feminist approach.

Historians are unanimous that Ellice Hopkins was crucial in the development of preventive work. Largely through the efforts of Ellice Hopkins', LACFGs were set up in towns and cities across the country. By 1879 such associations were established in Birmingham, Bristol, Nottingham, London, Edinburgh, Torquay, Cheltenham, Southampton, Winchester, Bradford, Dundee and Perth and subsequently in other towns.[63] By 1885 there were 85 such organisations catering for predominately working class young women.[64] Services offered by the LACFGs ranged from night shelters, clubs, hostels for working class women and registry offices and training homes for domestic servants. However, there are only a few scattered references to this work as, to date, the research has been based largely on Ellice Hopkins' writings rather than its practical application. It is therefore an aim of this thesis to demonstrate how Ellice Hopkins' theory was put into practice in Birmingham.

Ellice Hopkins also helped to found social purity groups. Along with Josephine Butler and other female philanthropists, she believed that the elimination of prostitution was only possible if men were encouraged to be chaste. When a Criminal Law Amendment Act (CLAA) which raised the age of consent to 16, gave police greater powers to close down brothels and made male homosexuality illegal was passed in 1885, social purity workers seized the opportunity to organise.[65] In the same year, Josephine Butler, Ellice Hopkins, Catherine Booth, William Stead and other social purity workers founded the NVA to ensure that the CLAA was enforced. The NVA dealt with a large variety of subjects connected with the moral well-being of young people. These ranged from the suppression of brothels, the employment of children on the stage, obscene literature, indecent pictures and photographs, indecent advertising and semi-nudity in musical halls.[66] New Scotland Yard even established a department to deal with indecent literature as a result of NVA pressure. In addition, the NVA campaigned to change the law still further: the Indecent Advertisement Act,1889; the Vagrancy Amendment Act, 1898; the Incest Act, 1908; and the CLAA 1908 were passed predominantly because of NVA crusading.[67]

The image of imperious middle class ladies wearing elegant dresses and large flowery hats dispensing moral soup to grateful impoverished women is now, thankfully, a fading one in the historiography of philanthropy. But elements of it are still present in the work of some of the earlier male historians.[68] As with the historiography of reform, later works tend to polarise

between radical and socialist feminists. Radical feminists like Jeffreys[69] and Jackson[70] see patriarchy, rather than class, as the over-arching oppression facing women. Gender, for them, transcends class, race and religion. Consequently, they emphasise unity rather than divisions between women. In contrast, Walkowitz[71] and Mort[72] are influenced by socialist feminism (as well as by Foucault) and thus relate the prevention of prostitution to capitalism as well as sexism. The upshot of this analysis is to see divisions rather than unity between women. The socialist feminist Bland[73] has tried to bridge the gap between these two extremes by charting the contradictions within social purity.

Bristow[74] is one of the first historians to write about social purity and his work has contributed to its scholarly development. Written from a liberal progressive standpoint, Bristow charts the development of the social purity movement. From a 1990's perspective Bristow's work is curiously dated because his analysis is obviously untouched by the later theoretical insights provided by feminist historians. This lack of a gender and class theory, however, is not its only weakness.

He has a tendency to emphasise the particular at the expense of the general by titillating his audience with spicy gossip. He has invented a narrative whereby both the rescued and the rescuer are viewed as tragic stereotypes. Peppered with words such as "rescue

harlots from Satan's grasp"[75] in order to attend "mawkish meetings",[76] his work is often filled with sly innuendoes, salacious gossip ("One expert warned male workers never to kneel down with women at midnight meetings, especially behind a pew"[77]) and vulgar expressions ("his sexual equipment swelled when he saw Josephine Butler on the platform"[78]) which belittle the achievements of female reformers. In many ways Bristow's writing echoes the language of Stead's Pall Mall Gazette, from which he draws a large part of his evidence. Little respect is also given to chronological conventions. Bristow tends to hop around the decades and centuries giving the book a rather disjointed feel. In addition, there are a few historical inaccuracies in his work. For instance Butler and Hopkins were both associated by Bristow with penitentiary work whereas they were involved in more radical reform organisations. Hopkins, in particular, wrote highly critical pamphlets about the dreadfulness of penitentiaries and would not have wanted to be associated with the management of such institutions.[79]

Largely because Bristow believes that social purity was inspired by religious puritans he views social purity movements as an homogeneous repressive entity which sought to curtail sexual expression. Social purity is viewed as a nineteenth century version of the Festival of Light, conservative, inhibiting, straitlaced and not to be given serious consideration. As a consequence, Hopkins' work is unfairly portrayed. Bristow acknowledges the vital contribution that Hopkins made to the formation of LACFGs but views Hopkins as an unfulfilled

spinster who sublimated her sexual passions for the movements she created,[80] became ill from neurotic diseases and died regretting that she had not married.[81] Other female reformers are given similar treatment by being portrayed as being slightly odious to men because they clung to a respectable and moribund morality.[82] Consequently, the radical philosophy of the early social purity groups is ignored. There is therefore little analysis of the concern that women social purity workers expressed about prostitution, white slavery and child sexual abuse. Feminist influence on social purity is forgotten and remains unexplored.

Prochaska's[83] excellently researched book usefully documents women's significant charitable contribution to the development of reform and preventive work. To his credit, Prochaska has rescued Victorian philanthropy from the Whig version of history which linked charity to the emerging welfare state and placed charity within a humanitarian context.[84] For many female philanthropists charitable work was a full time job which, according to Prochaska, makes one reassess the traditional view of the idle Victorian woman.[85] In a similar vein to Bristow, however, Prochaska's survey of this work is a 'Girl's Own' portrayal of breathless women bravely walking the streets and barging into brothels in a desperate attempt to catch their own fallen angel.[86] This rather prurient piece delights in gleefully recounting how rotten apples and eggs were thrown at middle class do-gooders as a result of their interference.[87]

Despite Prochaska's awareness that there was a relationship between preventive work and women's suffrage he believes it to be an anomaly. Women's political acumen is not treated seriously making the impact of feminism on rescue work a mere trifle rather than a central component of it.[88] For example, Hopkins' support of female suffrage is seen to contradict her social purity work whereas in reality they were mutually compatible.

Jeffreys,[89] writing from a radical feminist perspective, is critical of the way in which previous historians viewed social purity as an evangelical, anti-sex and repressive movement engendered by moral panic.[90] In contrast, she places the feminist contribution to social purity on the moral map by examining the way in which the ideas and personnel of the women's movement shaped its course. Two currents, she claims, flowed into the social purity stream: religious revivalism and the Contagious Diseases Acts (CDA's).[91] When the CDA's were repealed in 1886, women involved in the Ladies' National Association joined the social purity movement en masse.[92] From an early stage, the NVA was imbued with a feminist consciousness. Social purists, Jeffreys maintains, believed that men, not women, were responsible for prostitution.[93] As a result, women were seen, not as sinners, but as victims of masculine sexual irresponsibility. In addition, she argues, the NVA challenged the sexual double standard by which men were allowed a sexual licence denied to women.[94] Instead, the NVA advocated a gender neutral standard of morality in which men's sexual behaviour was to be circumscribed in a similar way as women's. This philosophy

underpinned the practice of the NVA, according to Jeffreys. Consequently, the NVA prosecuted rapists, child abusers, sexual harassers and men who indecently exposed themselves.[95] They also campaigned to tighten up the law on incest, to raise the age of consent and to make affiliation summonses more effective.

Mort's[96] criticism, that Jeffreys' gendered emphasis completely denies the contradictions within the NVA, is a little unfounded. On the contrary, Jeffreys catalogues the ambiguous position of women like Hopkins whose support for a double standard of morality originated from notions of male chivalry rather than feminism.[97] Nonetheless, in describing the unity of feminists and social purists, Jeffreys glosses over the tensions between them. Furthermore, in writing within the parameters of gender, Jeffreys misses out important class issues. For instance, there is little or no discussion of the ways in which the NVA used the middle class apparatus of the state to suppress brothels.

Writing from a similar radical feminist perspective as Jeffreys, Jackson[98] provides an equally invigorating and provocative alternative to Bristow but places social purity within a wider contemporary cultural context. Male power, Jackson asserts, was considerable in Victorian and Edwardian England. Such power was exhibited in sexuality as much as in high politics, economics, war and diplomacy. In this carefully researched book, Jackson charts the history of the feminist challenge to this patriarchal

model and examines the ways in which women attempted to construct a female centred sexual identity.

In Victorian and Edwardian England, Jackson argues, the struggle for female sexual autonomy was enacted through campaigns around spinsterhood, marriage and the double standard. Spinsterhood was celebrated as a rational choice by feminists who rejected marriage as a form of sex slavery. Criticisms of the double standard of morality and of male sexual aggression grew out of this same polemic.[99] Some of these debates, Jackson claims, found expression in the social purity movements of the late nineteenth century. For example the NVA was founded in 1885 in order to implement the CLAA passed that same year. Jackson examines this Act and the subsequent campaigns around it but neglects to put them into a critical context. Instead the CLAA is hailed as a progressive piece of legislation because it raised the age of consent from 13 to 16.[100] Not until many pages later does Jackson reveal that it also banned homosexuality.[101] The CLAA also, of course, assigned police greater powers to close brothels. Similarly Jackson emphasises the prosecution by the NVA of men who sexually abused young children but ignores their persecution of brothel owners and homosexuals. This is part of the danger in writing 'meta-narratives' of gender. In particular, radical feminists have a tendency to play down ambiguities within organisations they esteem.

Walkowitz [102] is perhaps the first historian to use theoretical insights in the writing of the history of prostitution and as

such feminist historians are indebted to her scholarship. Writing from what can loosely be defined as a socialist feminist perspective, underpinned by Foucauldian insights, Walkowitz also underplays ambiguities within the social purity movement but from a class as opposed to a gender perspective. For instance, Hopkins, acknowledged leader of the social purity movement, is seen to represent a right wing and reactionary trend.[103] Much of her work, Walkowitz argues, involved the banning of fairs and other working class leisure pursuits which were deemed immoral.[104] In particular, she stresses, the moral crusades of the social purity movements were repressive and hostile to working class culture.[105] Hopkins is thus compared unfavourably with Butler because of the latter's limited class perspective. Furthermore, because Hopkins favoured a radical change in male behaviour rather than a radical change in society her contribution to feminism is either undervalued or denied. Walkowitz therefore ultimately assumes that the concept of the working class struggle is intrinsically superior to that of the feminist - but it must also be recognised that, in 1980, conceptual models for labour history were much better developed than feminist models.

In contrast, Mort[106] recognises the contradictions, tensions and ambiguities both within the NVA and between them and the women's movement. Influenced by Foucault, feminist and socialist ideas, Mort produces both a gendered and a class perspective on social purity work. He acknowledges the middle class background of

social purity workers, the complicated motivations of Ellice Hopkins and the tensions which arose between a radical sexual politics and a repressive political framework.[107] These contradictions, he argues, caused a rift between middle and working class women. When purity workers tried to unite with their working class sisters social purity was doomed to failure, according to Mort, because the former were riddled with class prejudice. Unity was an illusion created by middle class women who mouthed platitudes of a common womanhood.[108] In reality, Mort claims, the middle class imposed its own definition of social purity onto the working class. One of the ways in which this was achieved was through the state.

Mort, particularly in his later work, demonstrates a deep seated fear about the growing power of the nineteenth century state which is perceived as an homogeneous, repressive entity rather than the contradictory instrument it was in practice. Thus when social purity workers liaised with the local police they are criticised for consorting with the working class enemy.[109] Underlying Mort's ideas is a belief that co-operating with the police is a bad thing - whatever the cause. Similarly, Mort maintains that the coercive legislation proposed by the social purity workers increased, to an alarming extent, the already powerful state.[110] Middle and upper class women and men used this increasingly powerful instrument "for enacting their own class specific demands".[111] In contrast, he argues, the working class viewed the state as a repressive force. The willingness of the middle class to work with agents of social control reflect the

class bias of reformers as much as their feminist concerns. Mort's political framework resists the fact that the state can be utilised to enact and enforce beneficial laws which protect the weaker sections of society - though whether a law will prove to be beneficial may not immediately be apparent, particularly as most laws can be considered to be repressive.

The polarity that sometimes existed between socialist feminists and radical feminists is bridged by Bland's work on social purity.[112] Like Mort, Bland is concerned with the ways in which the state increased its influence over the lives of its citizens.[113] Rather than viewing the state as a monolithic structure, however, Bland demonstrates its fragmentary nature. She charts the contradictory way in which social purity operated within a wider feminist framework and examines the religious motivation which gave such women a voice.[114] Bland supports Mort's argument by noting the tensions and the ambiguities within the NVA. On the one hand, the NVA espoused radical sexual politics: it campaigned, for example, against child sexual abuse. On the other hand, it rested within a middle class framework of repression: it helped, for example, to close down brothels and police prostitutes.[115] The contradictions within the social purity movement, Bland suggests, are not easily reconciled but are ones which still face feminists campaigning against pornography today.[116]

Most of the research on prevention, however, takes place mainly

on the London stage. In addition, research has tended to focus on the National Vigilance Association rather than the Ladies' Association for the Care of Friendless Girls. Where the latter is mentioned, research has been based on the writings of Ellice Hopkins' rather than on its practical application. One aim of this thesis therefore is to contribute to the knowledge of prevention by demonstrating how this work was managed within Birmingham. A further aim of this thesis is to utilise the categories of gender and class developed by both socialist and radical feminists, to add religion and 'race' as a category, and to argue that no one category can adequately explain the process of prevention.

Conclusion

Each of the theoretical debates about reform and prevention have their own internal strengths and weaknesses. Reform and preventive work was never a simple clear cut question, yet some historians try to impose a theoretical orthodoxy on a rather chaotic practice. Although it may be one of the historian's tasks to neaten up the rather untidy historical process, in the case of reform and prevention, such theories often tend to simplify rather complex issues. To some extent, women were rescued from the streets for humanitarian motives. The opposite is also true when one considers the life imposed on them in the penitentiaries. To some extent, socialist feminist theories offer a solution in that penitentiaries provided much needed domestic servants, exercised rigid social control and 'saved' the country

from moral degeneration. On the other hand, the minute numbers involved in either reform or prevention work make it difficult to believe that conspiracy theories existed amongst the upper echelons. To some extent radical feminist notions that social purity movements heralded the later women's movement by focussing on women's unity is correct. However, class barriers did not disappear within social purity organisations as middle class women identified with their class background as much as their gender. This thesis, nonetheless, will utilise the categories of gender and class developed by feminist historians and will seek to demonstrate that there is no ultimate determinant. In addition it will use the category of religion developed by church historians and suggest that religion - as well as that of 'race' - are also critical categories of analyses.

Notes and references

(1) See E Bristow, Vice and Vigilance, Gill and Macmillan, 1977; M P Hall and I V Howe, The Church in Social Work, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965; K Heasman, Evangelicals in Action, Geoffrey Bles, 1962; and L Mahood, The Magdalenes, Routledge, 1990.

(2) Solzenitsyn named the system of work camps in the USSR, the Gulag archipelago and others have described the prison system of Britain in a similar vein. See M Ignatieff, "State, Civil Society and Total Institutions: A Critique of Recent Social Histories of Punishment", in Cohen and Skull, Social Control and the State, 1983, p92.

(3) L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990, p75.

(4) M Vicinus, Independent Women, Virago, 1985, p71.

(5) E Bristow, Vice and Vigilance, 1977, p69.

(6) See L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990 and M Luddy "Prostitution and Rescue Work in Nineteenth-Century Ireland" in M Luddy and C Murphy, Women Surviving: Studies in Irish Women's History in the 19th and 20th centuries, Poolbeg Press, 1989.

(7) E Bristow, Vice and Vigilance, 1977, p69.

(8) In 1883 the Salvation Army set up its first rescue home in Glasgow. One year later, Mrs Booth opened the first English one in Whitechapel. See W Booth, In Darkest England and the Way Out, Salvation Army, 1890 for an overview of the development of Salvation Army rescue work.

(9) See E Bristow, Vice and Vigilance, 1977. Bristow's estimate may be conservative as many institutions were not recorded. For instance no records survive of the Salvation Army Home in Birmingham. Even the Salvation Army denied its existence until reference was made to the name of the Home, The Hawthornes. This reform home was mentioned in the Annual Reports of the Ladies Association for the Care of Friendless Girls and the National Union of Women Workers Quarterly Magazine. It was then traced in The Deliverer.

(10) The Clewer House of Mercy and the Dublin Penitentiary were exceptions. Both of these institutions accepted a small number of 'ladies' who were treated in a different way from the working class inmates. At Clewer, the 'ladies' paid £50 per year towards their keep. See V Bonham, A Place in Life, privately published, 1992, p220 and M Luddy, "Prostitution and Rescue Work in Nineteenth-Century Ireland", 1989, p62.

(11) F Finnegan, Poverty and Prostitution: A Study of Victorian Prostitutes in York, Cambridge University Press, 1979; M P Hall and I V Howe, The Church in Social Work, 1965; and L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990 all stress that penitent women had to undergo this humiliating treatment when they entered an asylum.

(12) F Finnegan, Poverty and Prostitution, 1979.

(13) See V Bonham, A Place in Life, 1992; F Finnegan, Poverty and Prostitution, 1979; L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990; and M Vicinus, Independent Women, 1985 for examples of the lack of freedom within asylums.

(14) M Vicinus, Independent Women, 1985, p78.

(15) See V Bonham, A Place in Life, 1992; F Finnegan, Poverty and Prostitution, 1979; and L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990.

(16) Every reform institution researched to date engaged in laundry work. See V Bonham, A Place in Life, 1992; F Finnegan, Poverty and Prostitution, 1979; M Luddy, "Prostitution and Rescue Work in Nineteenth Century Ireland", 1989; and L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990.

(17) F Finnegan, Poverty and Prostitution, 1979, p177.

(18) See L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990 and M Luddy, "Prostitution and Rescue Work in Nineteenth-Century Ireland", 1989.

(19) L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990, p88-89.

(20) V Bonham, A Place in Life, 1992, p205.

(21) F Finnegan, Poverty and Prostitution, 1979.

(22) See L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1992.

(23) F Finnegan, Prostitution and Poverty, 1979.

(24) See V Bonham, A Place in Life, 1992; F Finnegan, Prostitution and Poverty, 1979; and L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990.

(25) L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990, p81.

(26) K Heasman, Evangelicals in Action, 1962.

(27) Josephine Butler and Charles Dickens were amongst many social activists who set up homes to reform prostitutes. In addition, the Salvation Army also founded homes. These tended to be ad hoc arrangements in an officer's home. Only in the latter part of the century were official homes established. By 1890 the Salvation Army had founded thirteen homes in Britain. (W Booth, In Darkest England, 1890.) No historian, however, has analysed these types of home in any detail.

(28) K Heasman, Evangelicals in Action, 1962, pp148-168.

(29) V Bonham, A Place in Life, 1992; M P Hall and I V Howe, The Church in Social Work, 1965; and K Heasman, Evangelicals in Action, 1962 all typify this genre.

(30) L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1992, p152.

(31) M Vicinus, Independent Women, 1985, pp71-81. M Vicinus, as an American radical feminist, comes from a different tradition of radical feminism than English feminists and offers a more sophisticated interpretation of the relationship between gender and class. To date, however, there has been no in-depth study of reform institutions by either English or American radical feminists.

(32) M P Hall and I V Howe, The Church in Social Work, 1965.

(33) F Finnegan, Poverty and Prostitution, 1979.

(34) See F Finnegan, Poverty and Prostitution, 1979, pp172-173.

(35) L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990, p5.

(36) F Finnegan, Poverty and Prostitution, 1979.

(37) See L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1992; L Mahood, "The Magdalene's Friend", Women's Studies International Forum, Volume 13, 1990; and B Littlewood and L Mahood, "Prostitutes, Magdalenes and Wayward Girls: Dangerous Sexualities of Working Class Women

in Victorian Scotland", Gender and History, Summer, 1991.

(38) L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990, p7.

(39) B Littlewood and L Mahood, "Prostitutes, Magdalenes and Wayward Girls", 1991.

(40) L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990, pp75-105.

(41) L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990.

(42) L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990, p85.

(43) See P Horn, The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant, Alan Sutton, 1990.

(44) See S Lewenhak, Women and Trade Unions, Ernest Benn, 1977; J Rendall, Women in an Industrializing Society: England 1750-1880, Basil Blackwell, 1990; and L Tilly and J Scott, Women, Work and Family, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978 for illustrations of how women were disadvantaged in the world of paid work.

(45) L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990, pp123-155. Interestingly, Mahood makes no mention of the Salvation Army Home set up in Glasgow which may have offered a different management style to penitentiaries. See W Booth, In Darkest England, 1890.

(46) G Stedman Jones, "Class expression versus social control? A critique of recent trends in the social history of 'leisure'", History Workshop Journal, Autumn, 1977, p164.

(47) See F M L Thompson, "Social Control in Victorian Britain", The Economic History Review, Volume 34, Number 2, 1981; and G Stedman Jones, "Class expression versus social control", 1977.

(48) L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990.

(49) L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990.

(50) V Bonham, A Place in Life, 1992.

(51) Hall M P, and Howe, I V, The Church in Social Work, 1965.

(52) V Bonham, A Place in Life, pp204-205.

(53) M Vicinus, Independent Women, 1985.

(54) M Vicinus, Independent Women, 1985, p78.

(55) M Vicinus, Independent Women, 1985, pp74-84.

(56) M Vicinus, Independent Women, 1985, p55.

(57) M Luddy, "Prostitution and Rescue Work in Nineteenth-Century Ireland", 1989; M Luddy, "An Outcast Community: The 'wrens' of

the Curragh", Women's History Review, Volume 1, Number 3, 1992.

(58) M Luddy, "Prostitution and Rescue Work in Nineteenth-Century Ireland", 1989, p64.

(59) K Heasman, Evangelicals in Action, 1962, pp150-161.

(60) K Heasman, Evangelicals in Action, 1962, p11.

(61) Heasman places her work within a religious context but is highly critical of penitentiaries for their emphasis on sin, atonement, discipline and punishment, possibly because of different doctrinal beliefs to Hall and Howes.

(62) S Cohen, The Evolution of Women's Asylums since 1500, Oxford University Press, 1992.

(63) S Jeffreys, The Spinster and her Enemies, Pandora, 1985, pp17-18.

(64) E Bristow, Vice and Vigilance, 1977, p98.

(65) See S Jeffreys, The Spinster and her Enemies, 1985, pp16-18 and F Mort, Dangerous Sexualities, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987, pp126-130.

(66) See S Jeffreys, The Spinster and her Enemies, 1985; and F Mort, Dangerous Sexualities, 1987 for further details.

(67) See S Jeffreys, The Spinster and her Enemies, 1985; and F Mort, Dangerous Sexualities, 1987.

(68) In particular, E Bristow, Vice and Vigilance, 1979 and F Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England, Clarendon Press, 1980.

(69) S Jeffreys, The Spinster and her Enemies, 1985.

(70) M Jackson, The Real Facts of Life, Taylor and Francis, 1993.

(71) J Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society, 1980.

(72) F Mort, Dangerous Sexualities, 1987.

(73) L Bland, "'Purifying' the Public World: feminist vigilantes in late Victorian England", Women's History Review, Volume 1, Number 3, 1992; Banishing the Beast: English feminism and sexual morality, Ph.D., Birmingham, 1994.

(74) E Bristow, Vice and Vigilance, 1977.

(75) E Bristow, Vice and Vigilance, 1977, p63.

(76) E Bristow, Vice and Vigilance, 1977, p70.

(77) E Bristow, Vice and Vigilance, 1977, p70.

(78) E Bristow, Vice and Vigilance, 1977.

(79) See E Hopkins, Notes on Penitentiary Work, Hatchards, 1879.

(80) E Bristow, Vice and Vigilance, 1977, p96.

(81) E Bristow, Vice and Vigilance, 1977, pp96-100.

(82) E Bristow, Vice and Vigilance, 1977, pp96-100.

(83) F Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, 1980.

(84) A Kidd, "Towards a Social History of Victorian Philanthropy: the Relevance of Social and Cultural Theory", Social History Society Conference, 1995.

(85) F Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, 1980, p224.

(86) F Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, 1980, p192.

(87) F Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, 1980, p193.

(88) F Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, 1980, p218.

(89) S Jeffreys, The Spinster and her Enemies, 1985; S Jeffreys, '"Free from all invited touch of man': women's campaigns around sexuality, 1889-1914", in L Coveney et al., Exploration in Feminism: the Sexuality Papers, Hutchinson, 1984.

(90) S Jeffreys, The Spinster and her Enemies, 1985, p6.

(91) S Jeffreys, The Spinster and her Enemies, 1985, p7.

(92) S Jeffreys, The Spinster and her Enemies, 1985, p7.

(93) S Jeffreys, The Spinster and her Enemies, 1985, p8.

(94) S Jeffreys, The Spinster and her Enemies, 1985, pp9-26.

(95) S Jeffreys, The Spinster and her Enemies, 1985, p72.

(96) F Mort, Dangerous Sexualities, 1987.

(97) S Jeffreys, The Spinster and her Enemies, 1985, p13.

(98) M Jackson, The Real Facts of Life, 1993.

(99) M Jackson, The Real Facts of Life, 1993, pp22-31.

(100) M Jackson, The Real Facts of Life, 1993, p30.

(101) M Jackson, The Real Facts of Life, 1993, p71.

(102) J Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society, 1980.

(103) J Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society, 1980, pp238-239.

(104) J Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society, 1980, p243.

(105) J Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society, 1980, p239.

(106) F Mort, "Purity, feminism and the state: sexuality and moral politics, 1880-1914", in M Langan and B Schwarz, "Crises in the British State, Hutchinson, 1985; F Mort, Dangerous Sexualities, 1987.

(107) F Mort, Dangerous Sexualities, 1987, pp103-151.

(108) F Mort, Dangerous Sexualities, 1987, pp123-124.

(109) F Mort, Dangerous Sexualities, 1987, pp122-123.

(110) F Mort, Dangerous Sexualities, 1987, p127.

(111) F Mort, Dangerous Sexualities, 1987, p141.

(112) L Bland, "'Purifying' the Public World", 1992; Banishing the Beast, 1994.

(113) L Bland, "'Purifying' the Public World", 1992, p399.

(114) L Bland, "'Purifying' the Public World", 1992, p403.

(115) L Bland, "'Purifying' the Public World", 1992, p400.

(116) L Bland, "'Purifying' the Public World", 1992, p410.

PART TWO: THE REFORMERS[1]

Introduction

There were two main institutions set up to reform prostitutes and four main organisations founded to prevent prostitution in Birmingham between 1860-1914. The central focus of this chapter will be an examination of the people who founded them, their motivations and their practice. The chapter is divided into three distinct, but unequal, sections. First of all the men and women who managed the Magdalen Asylum will be investigated. Next, the Ladies' Association for the Care of Friendless Girls, (LACFG) the Birmingham Ladies' Association for the Care and Protection of Young Girls, (BLACPYG) the Girls' Night Shelter (GNS) and the Agatha Stacey Homes (ASH) will be appraised.[2] Finally the Birmingham and Midland Counties' Vigilance Association will be analysed.(BMCVA) Each of these sections falls into two parts. The class background, religious composition and political affiliations of the men and women who managed the reform and preventive organisations in Birmingham will be examined initially. This will be followed by an analysis of the work of the men and women who belonged to these organisations.

It will be argued that the category of gender was neither fixed nor homogeneous in nineteenth and early twentieth century Birmingham moral reform politics. Expectations of women and men varied according to their class position and religious affiliation. For instance, women involved in the mixed Magdalen Asylum played a subordinate role whereas women who worked in

all female organisations did not. The disparity between women's work in mixed and single sex organisations, however, may have been due as much to doctrinal differences as to gender. Women's roles were also defined by class. Charitable work cut across the gendered class divide by enabling women to keep within the well regulated boundaries of the middle class. Middle class women, unlike working class women, were not expected to take a paid job but were expected to participate in unpaid charitable work.

It will be demonstrated in this chapter that there was no single class involved in these disparate organisations but an assortment of occupational groupings which ranged from middle ranking land owners to middle class manufacturers. Equally there were two contrasting middle class elites, those of the traditionally professional class of clergy, lawyer and merchant and those of the factory manufacturer. No working class person appears to have been involved in reform and prevention work.

Class, it will be argued, was mediated by religion and politics and gender. There was no one coherent class ideology in Birmingham but a set of ideologies based on different gender, religious and political assumptions which influenced the work of women and men. Two main religious groups, the Anglicans and the Nonconformists, were involved in the reform of prostitutes and the prevention of prostitution. The people within these religious groups allied themselves to different political parties which again influenced the construction of class. Gender was

also crucial in that men and women were expected to conduct themselves in quite different ways.

To summarise, gender is only one of a set of categories with which to understand the process of moral reform in Birmingham. Gender was an important category but it was not the only one: both class and religion informed the theory and practice of reform and prevention politics. Consequently it will be maintained that no over-arching category of analysis can adequately elucidate the process of moral reform. In addition, it will be claimed that the categories of gender and class were not rigid, autonomous, or indeed homogeneous but were inter-relational, fluid, historically specific and sometimes competing.

Notes and References

(1) See Appendix 1 for further details of the people involved.

(2)These are discussed jointly, largely because the same (or similar) women were involved in all four organisations.

Chapter Two: The Reformers

i. The Magdalen Asylum

a) membership of the Asylum Committees

The Magdalen Asylum was governed by upper and middle class men with women acting in a supportive capacity. At the, predominantly male, apex came the President, two or three Vice-Presidents and Trustees followed by an elected[1] all male Committee[2] (though not named as such) and two all female Committees[3] (called a Ladies Committee and a Ladies Association in Aid of the Funds).[4] From the outset, the higher echelons of the Magdalen Asylum were dominated by male clerics and a few male aristocrats.[5] The Lord Bishop of Worcester remained President until 1904 when the newly created Lord Bishop of Birmingham took over the role. From 1861-1902 all the Vice Presidents were Earls or Lords.[6] In 1903 the Vice Presidency grew in numbers but still remained aristocratic.[7] Clergy and their wives were fairly well represented on the Committees, particularly from the 1890's.[8]

Class background was an important element in the composition of the Asylum and the motivation of the people concerned. Aristocrats like the Calthorpes were represented possibly because of their wealth and connections rather than because of their personal interest. By the 1880s the Calthorpes were a wealthy, important and influential family with an income exceeding £25,000 per annum from their Edgbaston estates alone.[9] They were, according to Cannadine, among the most prosperous and

influential of second ranking land-owners. In fact, they owned most of Edgbaston.[10] Similarly, Sir James Sawyer owned estates in Warwickshire,[11] whereas Lord Dartmouth owned land in Sandwell. Cannadine has maintained that "the ancestors of these aristocrats were the unquestioned social and political leaders of the town"[12] which made their patronage sought.[13] Aristocratic benevolence was thought an indispensable part of the English social order designed to promote class harmony and habits of deference.[14] Even in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the aristocratic role was deemed to be a paternalistic one. The country estate of the Calthorpes in particular had responsibilities as well as rights for it was anticipated that the landed gentry would take an interest in their own communities.[15] The Magdalen Asylum was only one of a number of charitable enterprises with which the Calthorpes were involved.[16] Nonetheless, charitable work was low on the list of Frederick Calthorpe's priorities.[17] He regarded "Edgbaston as a source of revenue and little else, and philanthropy as an activity not to be indulged in generously or personally. 'I know they think I ought to subscribe more, but I will not'...he replied'".[18] Apparently Frederick contributed £312 per annum to all charities - an infinitesimal amount from such a large income.[19] Between 1861-1893 the Lord Calthorpes subscribed ten guineas of this to the Magdalen Asylum.[20]

When his younger brother, Augustus Cholmondeley, aged 64, inherited the estate in 1893 he increased his late brother's charitable subscription to £546 but this was still derisory

charitable subscription to £546 but this was still derisory compared to the income derived from his estates.[21] Furthermore, the Magdalen Asylum did not benefit from this as August Cholmondeley reduced his subscription to two guineas.[22]

Being associated, however, with such illustrious figures may have been beneficial to the Asylum because it conveyed an image of respectability and aristocratic dignity. Furthermore the high status that the upper class conferred on the Asylum might in turn have attracted funding but there is no evidence to substantiate this.

Not all men involved in the Magdalen Asylum were of such patrician stock but they still belonged to a social and/or a religious elite which assumed an active involvement in philanthropy.[23] Not surprisingly, given the religious foundation of the Asylum, clergy were well represented. The President was always a Bishop and some of the Executive Committee members were clergy.[24] A few served for long periods. For twenty six years, between 1889-1904 when he died, the Reverend Blissard, the first Vicar of St Augustine's, Edgbaston and Rural Dean of Birmingham,[25] was a Committee member.[26] From 1889, largely as a result of Blissard's influence, the clergy membership increased further.[27] Like Blissard who was a Cambridge graduate of St Johns, most of these vicars were Oxbridge graduates[28] all of which suggests that they belonged to the upper ranks of the clergy rather than to the impecunious mass.[29] At least two of the clergy were not out of place in aristocratic circles.[30]

This male coterie seemed to share religious and political values. The clergy were all Church of England, often from an Evangelical tradition. For instance, Reverend Hodson, the founder of the Magdalen Asylum, was a leading Evangelical, appointed Archdeacon of Stafford by the Evangelical bishop of Lichfield, Ryder, who wished to see an extension of Evangelical influence in the diocese.[31] It seems likely therefore that the Magdalen Asylum would have had a decidedly Evangelical impetus.[32] It has been suggested that by 1890 the church in Birmingham practised a narrow form of Evangelicalism which was resistant to change.[33] Anglican Evangelicals traditionally regarded pastoral as well as spiritual work as an essential aspect of a minister's vocation and sought to propagate the gospel through charity. It was believed that religious conversion took place through community politics as well as formal Christian rituals.[34] The Church of England therefore helped the less fortunate in order, in part at least, to offer redemption and save souls.[35] Parish activities, which ranged from talking to communicant members, chairing various societies, caring for the poor and organising worthwhile leisure activities provided the means by which this could take place. Managing the Magdalen Asylum was an extension of these parish responsibilities. By casting their philanthropic net into the pool of prostitutes, Church of England Evangelicals hoped, perhaps, to catch a few sinners for God.

Personal salvation was also a strong motivating factor governing

the reform of prostitutes as Evangelicalism was essentially an individualistic creed. To reclaim a single individual soul from eternal spiritual damnation was considered to be an important offering to God.[36] The redemption of a single prostitute accorded with the Magdalen Asylum managers' perceptions of personal faith. Volunteers were encouraged to do all in their power to help the 'fallen' to "return to the ways of happiness, peace and holiness."[37]

Class and religion were also mediated by politics. A few of the lay members of the Committee were staunch Conservative supporters.[38] Sir James Sawyer was a member of the Birmingham Conservative Association.[39] Initially the Calthorpes had represented the Liberal interest in Parliament but in 1880 Augustus Calthorpe stood against Chamberlain as a Conservative candidate.[40] By 1895 the sixth Lord Calthorpe was chairman of the Midland Union of Conservative Associations. Those located further down the hierarchy of the Magdalen Asylum also supported Conservative politics.[41]

Although the clergy were supposedly politically neutral, there is evidence to suggest that many Church of England vicars tended to be sympathetic to Conservative politics.[42] It has been commonly assumed that the Church of England nationally was the "Tory party at prayer".[43] Birmingham seemed to support the national pattern as no member of the clergy espoused Liberalism.[44] Furthermore, most Evangelicals accepted the class structure which existed in Victorian and Edwardian England as

part of the natural order of events and had no wish to change it.[45]

Conservative politics may well have underpinned the religious theory of the managers of the Magdalen Asylum. Not all clergy accepted that religious ideas should be contingent upon political belief. Reverend Denton Thompson for instance suggested that religion should stand above party politics.[46]

Women also played a role in managing the Magdalen Asylum. The Executive were assisted by two Ladies' Committees. All but one of the women who served on the Ladies' Committee were married. A few women were married to men who were also involved in the Asylum.[47] It is more problematic to assess the class background, religious affiliation and political beliefs of the women who managed the Magdalen Asylum. To some extent these women had no class position of their own but derived their class from their husbands, regardless of their former family background.[48] Similarly, these women may have belonged to the same church and political party as their husbands but we have no proof of this.[49]

It could be argued that clergy wives joined the Ladies' Committee because they were expected to do so and not solely because of a desire to help other women. In some ways, clergy wives were merely fulfilling their social duty by acting in a supportive capacity. Certainly, press reports suggest that women assisted in, rather than led, the philanthropic field.[50] However, the term

"ably assisted" or "seconding her husband's efforts" requires unpacking.[51] In using such language women were merely seen to be performing their wifely duty. Defined as help-meets of their husbands, women's charitable unpaid work outside the home did not threaten the gendered status-quo. It cannot be assumed, however, that all women joined the Asylum Committee because of a husband's interest. Some women joined the Committee before their husbands, one continued to be active after her husband's death while others had no husband serving on the Committee.[52] It could be argued that men may have agreed to participate in managing the Asylum because their wives were interested in rescue and reform work.

Marriage gave middle class women the economic freedom to engage in charitable work. Women from middle class backgrounds would not have been expected to accomplish paid work but may have wished to do something beyond the home. Marriage also conferred a respectable status on women which enabled them to work with 'fallen women'. Married women were above reproach in the way that single women were not. Until 1901, apart from one exception, only married women participated in the Magdalen Asylum possibly because it was thought inappropriate for young and single females to be working with those who were not so chaste. However, there is no evidence to either substantiate or refute this.

Furthermore, the fact that many of the women were married to members of Evangelical clergy raises important issues relating to their role in the Asylum. Marriage to such respectable

figures may have given married women a certain moral edge over single women. With God, or at least his representative, so firmly at their side, the women involved in the Asylum were seemingly protected from adverse criticism. The virtuous wives of clergy epitomised moral rectitude. As such they may have been seen to be best suited to rescue 'fallen women' because, protected by the moral righteousness of their husbands, they were unlikely to be contaminated by the licentiousness of the inmates. Conservatively minded gentlemen could therefore rest assured that respectable women involved in the reform of 'fallen' women remained morally safe. These women became knowledgeable about impurity, talked about sexual matters generally considered inappropriate and associated with women far below them in the moral scale but allegedly religious conviction and faith kept them pure.

b) managing the Magdalen Asylum

Gender, class and religious background were also important in the allocation of roles within the Asylum. A distinct sexual and class division of labour operated within the management structure of the Magdalen Asylum. Men and women's work was sharply delineated according to well defined class and gender stereotypes.

Men held all the top posts but these were bestowed according to class and religious position. To a large extent the Presidency and Vice Presidency were nominal posts: there is no evidence to

suggest that these individuals were involved in the day to day care of the institution. Apart from very occasionally presiding at the Annual Conference the Lord Bishop of Worcester, and later the Lord Bishop of Birmingham, played no part in the affairs of the Asylum. By 1890 the Bishop of Worcester was an octogenarian who rarely left his palace at Hartlebury Castle.[53]

Equally, the Vice Presidents did little. Lord Dartmouth often chaired the Annual Meetings in place of the Bishop but there is no evidence that he did anything else.[54] The three Lord Calthorpes who acted as Vice President of the Asylum contributed little other than their name. Their charitable role was "more decorative than efficient".[55] The Calthorpes' practical help was nominal as they were not sufficiently in touch with the day to day administration of the Asylum. Indeed the fifth Lord Calthorpe, Frederick Henry William, who succeeded to the title in 1868 proved to be very much of an absentee landlord.[56] He rarely visited the neighbourhood[57] preferring to spend his time hunting, shooting and gambling, leaving the management of his large estate to his land agent:

> ...we may safely risk the assertion that not one resident upon the estate out of a thousand had any idea of the personal appearance of the late lord of the manor, or had ever seen him.[58]

His younger brother, Augustus Cholmondeley, was little different in that he only visited Birmingham twice a year.[59] One can assume that attending to the business of the Magdalen Asylum was, as for his brother before him, of minor interest. Indeed,

Augustus Cholmondeley incurred adverse criticism. On one occasion he was viciously attacked for his limited contribution to Birmingham. Although the Town Crier was a satirical magazine which took a strong delight in lambasting public figures, the following extract sums up the lack of real charitable interest shown by Augustus Calthorpe:

> What are your claims upon Birmingham?...You have no claims whatever...For years you have lived close to us, in possession of abundant means and ample leisure. You have never been amongst us, never lifted a finger to help us, never given us, so far as the public knows, one single moment of your time...We look at the lists of those who conduct our great educational, charitable and social movements...But in these lists the name of Calthorpe is conspicuous by its absence...You are glad to get our money; and you keep it, close and hard, when you have got it.[60]

From 1910 the Calthorpe name disappears from the Vice Presidency. Consequently, one is led to assume, the post of Vice President was linked to the estate rather than the person. It was the family name rather than the individual who counted. None of the Annual Reports indicated that there were three Lord Calthorpes who acted as Vice President and this adds further weight to the argument that as individuals they did not play a significant role.

On the other hand, the policy and practice - the real work - was achieved by a different group of people.[61] It was the middle as opposed to the upper class who exerted the real power within the Asylum. Middle class men presented the public face of the institution. In some respects they acted as public relations officers for they spoke at public meetings and to the press.

These men also acted in a managerial capacity. Decisions relating to the Asylum's philosophy and daily affairs were made by men. The (male) Committee hired and fired workers wrote the Annual Reports and represented the Asylum at meetings. When interest in the Magdalen Asylum was seen to be flagging it was men who were responsible for reinvigorating it.[62] These men, however, played little part in the day to day life of the Asylum.[63]

The public face of the institution was male dominated but the private world was quite definitely female.[64] Women (even the two women Vice Presidents) took no part in the public affairs of the Asylum. Women played a more private, social, personal role than that of their male counterparts on the Committee. In many ways women's work was an extension of their housekeeping and mothering role. Women were involved in the day to day business of the Asylum but did not make policy. Instead they can be seen to act as overseers of the all male managing directors. Women supervised the internal affairs of the establishment, visited the institution weekly, inspected all the departments and assisted the matrons in the discharge of their responsibilities. Women were also responsible for the education of the inmates. They gave instruction in reading and arithmetic each Monday and held regular Bible Classes.[65] In the 1890's, when visits and outings were organised for the inmates, women were responsible for organising these events.[66] In addition, women were in charge of collecting funds, though not necessarily spending them. Annual Reports often pay tribute to the work of women in this respect,

which reinforces the idea that women were only expected to play a supportive role within the Asylum:

> collected a large proportion of the funds, and more particularly to those of them who have devoted their time and efforts to the visitation of the Home and to the instruction of the inmates in religious truth.[67]

The management committee thought it appropriate for women to engage in such work because of the former's gendered ideology. As the following extract suggests, women possessed preordained virtues generally denied to men:

> The visiting of their erring sisters was peculiarly their task because it was one of those tasks which the other sex unless officially connected with the institution could not appropriately perform even if they had that kindness of heart and manner of dealing with the repentant sinner which was so markedly the attribute of Englishwomen.[68]

Philanthropic work of this kind was therefore an extension of women's domestic role and posed little threat to the accepted gender order. The domestic ideology, so beloved of the middle class, remained unchallenged - as did bourgeois notions of the separate spheres of men and women.[69] Women's charitable work buttressed the social welfare role of their clergy and lay husbands without challenging orthodox gender assumptions and upsetting the gendered status quo. In the light of this, female unity between benefactors and beneficiaries appears unlikely unless it was one based upon resistance to a domestic ideology.[70]

ii. The Ladies' Association for the Care of Friendless Girls, (LACFG) the Birmingham Ladies' Association for the Care and Protection of Young Girls, (BLACPYG) the Girls' Night Shelter (GNS) and the Agatha Stacey Homes. (ASH).

a) membership of the LACFG, the BLACPYG, the GNS and ASH

In contrast, the managers of the Ladies' Association for the Care of Friendless Girls, (LACFG), the Birmingham Ladies' Association for the Care and Protection of Young Girls, (BLACPYG), the Girls' Night Shelter, (GNS) and the Agatha Stacey Homes (ASH) were quite different from the men and women who managed the Magdalen Asylum. For a start the managers of the former were all women. In addition, the class background, political ideology and religious beliefs of those active in these organisations were quite distinct from those of the Magdalen Asylum philanthropists. Although the women who managed the all women organisations were middle class they were married to men who were manufacturers, held Liberal political beliefs and were Nonconformists committed to the civic gospel. In the next section, these differences will be examined in greater detail. Firstly the background and motivations of the women who managed women only organisations will be discussed. This will be followed by an analysis of the ways in which the expectations of gender, class and religion created the framework in which charitable work was accomplished.

Visions of female solidarity might well have prompted many of the women to engage in philanthropic work. Their intellectual grasp

of contemporary women's issues was indicated by their personal commitment to feminism. It can be demonstrated that women's rights and moral reform were, if not inextricably linked, then certainly intimately connected in Birmingham as elsewhere.[71] Many of the women who belonged to these organisations supported at least equal rights feminism to the extent that they subscribed to the suffrage movement.[72] Some were prominent members of the Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage.[73] Others[74] supported the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts.[75]

> It was at her house (Mrs Kenways) that I first met Mrs Josephine Butler...How often since then has Mrs Butler spoken of the strength and help she received from Mrs Kenway, and from the meetings at her house in the years that followed.[76]

Many belonged to a network[77] which allowed them to carve out a role for themselves within a context that was essentially female centred. There is certainly strong evidence to suggest the existence of a cohesive women's group within Edgbaston. A shared friendship group may have been of greater importance to women than men because women had no work ties to bind them together but there is no evidence to substantiate this. Most women lived within the same local area of Edgbaston, some lived within walking distance of one other and easily commutable distance of their various homes and shelters.[78] Some women met socially.[79] In addition many women belonged to more than one women's charity and held joint membership of the LACFG, BLACPYG, the GNS and the ASH.[80] Female networking may well have underpinned the structures of these organisations and helped to formalise and

develop charitable work in general.

To some extent, feminism provided the justification, momentum and support for women who wished to participate in moral reform politics. Birmingham women, in the same way as Levine[81] has demonstrated for women elsewhere, saw feminism as central to their lives.[82] In addition, Levine has shown that women who took political action in support of their gender created their own social milieu. From this perceived position of strength, Birmingham Nonconformist women reached out across the class divide to embrace their working class sisters in a common female culture. Or so it was believed.

Gender, however, coalesced with class. Most, if not all, of the women belonged to middle class families.[83] A considerable number of women were married to manufacturers or solicitors.[84] That their husbands were middle class, however, was important in the process of moral reform and the class specific construction of gender for a number of reasons. Husbands were prosperous enough to enable their wives to have sufficient time to engage in charitable enterprises. Such women were not restricted by the economic constraints faced by working class, and indeed lower middle class, women: they did not have to seek waged work. Charity relied upon the unpaid work of middle class women. Only those who were economically independent or married to men who were financially secure could afford to take unpaid work. Working class women, for obvious reasons, did not engage in unpaid charitable work of this nature in Birmingham. Neither did

impoverished widows.[85]

Middle class women also had time as well as money. A band of servants, nannies and governesses, paid for by the husband, freed middle class women from domestic responsibilities at home. The support that middle class women received from working class domestic servants raises questions about the complex relationship between gender and class. Middle class women gained domestic freedom at the expense of low paid workers. In some respects middle class women's emancipation emerged as a consequence of other women's bondage. There is perhaps a none too subtle irony that middle class women paid three times over for domestic service. Once for their own employees, twice for their own unpaid charitable work and thirdly in the subscriptions they paid to the charitable bodies who housed, fed, clothed and trained domestic servants. The money spent on charitable work could have been spent in raising the wages of their own staff. This, in turn, would have made domestic servants less vulnerable to economic fluctuations. This anomaly would, given the historical period, no doubt have escaped the members of the Committee. As a consequence the philosophical anchor of feminism was loosened by class.

Furthermore, charitable work did not undermine middle class notions of femininity. Because charitable work remained unpaid it did not challenge the social order. The accepted idea that the middle class man should economically provide for his wife and children remained unchallenged.[86] Women's work, classified as

voluntary work, was not essential to the family income. It was done at the whim of the women, and perhaps with the blessing of the husband, but could equally be dropped without any economic impact on the immediate family. Consequently, male and female roles remained distinct.

Philanthropic women were not only drawn from a wealthy section of society but were married to politically active, Nonconformist men who were engaged in municipal politics.[87] Many women were married or connected to influential Birmingham men who, until the split in 1886, supported the Liberal party.[88] Because women's political persuasion is difficult to analyse, certainly before 1918, it can only perhaps be inferred that they shared similar political ideals as those of their husbands. It cannot be assumed that all of these women supported the Liberal cause but there is evidence that many did.[89] This commitment to Liberal values may have informed women's participation in charitable work.

Politics was firmly linked to religion. Birmingham was a stronghold of Nonconformity composed of Unitarians, Congregationalists, Baptists and Quakers, all of whom were heavily represented in the LACFG, the BLACPYG, the GNS and ASH.[90] The majority of women were married to Nonconformists, a disproportionate number of whom were Quakers.[91] We cannot know with certainty, apart from the Quakers, whether or not these women shared their husbands' religious beliefs. Quakers were unable to marry 'outside' the Society of Friends at this time so

one can safely assume that all the women married to Quakers were themselves Quakers. Furthermore, the Quakers published lists of members so it was possible to trace the women in their own right.[92]

Nonconformists held a belief in the civic gospel which underpinned their charity work. Indeed Birmingham had within its religious ranks the originator and one of the most vigorous disciples of the civic gospel. Dawson, a former Baptist minister opened the Church of the Saviour in the middle of Birmingham and managed to forge links between the business community and their churches.[93] Many influential figures in Birmingham's municipal life attended Dawson's non-denominational Church of the Saviour in the town centre. Small in number, but with a great deal of influence, Quakers supported and extended these ideas. Later on in the century, the Congregationalist and Evangelical Christian, Dale, also urged fuller political participation by the churches.[94] Together, Dawson and Dale, reflect significant changes in Christian thinking since the mid century. Influenced by incarnational theology and by the Sermon on the Mount, Nonconformists saw Christ as a great revolutionary concerned with the redemption of the temporal as well as of the spiritual world.[95] The aim of such Nonconformists was to socialise Christianity. As a consequence, their religion was a much more politically critical evangelicalism than that of the Church of England. Birmingham Nonconformists thus embraced a broader vision of community life which questioned the dominant values of laissez-faire and self-help. Religion and capitalism, to these

men's minds, were mutually compatible as Christian morality applied to every aspect of social life.

Nonconformists believed that municipal government had responsibility to reduce inequalities as the gospel alone could not cure the sick or provide decent houses for the poor.[96] In addition, well fed, well housed and clean individuals, it was believed, were more likely to espouse moral values than those living in dilapidated buildings without sanitation. God's will was therefore expressed in the civic gospel which became the theological imperative for Birmingham Nonconformists. Social improvements, set in force by the civic gospel, provided a role model for the rest of Britain. Under the Nonconformist aegis, Birmingham achieved municipal gas and water, slum clearance, art galleries, museums, libraries, a new university and its own bishopric.[97] This "gas and water"[98] socialism was a fitting testimony to the Nonconformist Liberal tradition. Consequently, traditional Evangelical theology was forced onto the defensive as this newer thinking stressed God's mercy rather than punishment for the wicked.[99]

Private philanthropy filled any gaps. Nonconformists were often involved in charitable enterprises as well as public welfare politics.[100] As the wives of distinguished philanthropists, women may have been expected to support their Nonconformist husbands in charitable work.[101] Many women were married to men or belonged to families who were associated with this philosophy.

Mrs Dale's husband was a leading exponent of the civic gospel in Birmingham, as were other members of Carrs Lane. Similarly the Quakers - there were seven Quaker mayors before 1892 - believed in municipal responsibility. Women could, therefore, be seen to complement and consolidate the work of their socially aware spouses. Quakers, theoretically, did not hold this opinion, although in practice this varied.

> Another result of the position associated to women in public matters, is the equal standing with their husbands that they have in their own families.[102]

It has been argued so far that women were influenced by the class and religious background of their husbands. However, it cannot be fully established that all these women were married to supportive men.[103] It may well be that some women encountered resistance from their husbands in working for the reform and preventive organisations but there are no records available to support this. A few women, rather than acting in a supportive capacity, were supported by their husbands:

> To Mrs Josephine Butler's pioneer work in the cause of social purity she gave her ardent sympathy and help, loyally supported in this by her husband.[104]

As Levine demonstrates, women were not only influenced by their husbands but by grand-parents, fathers, mothers, aunts and cousins.[105] Birmingham women activists often possessed a long and venerable genealogy.[106] Mrs Osler's mother, for example, had helped to form the Birmingham branch of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. A long family tradition of political radicalism may well have played an equal, and sometimes more

important role in motivating women to engage in philanthropy than a husband's enthusiasm:

> Schooldays for Quaker children meant an increase in this sense of responsibility for service, which had begun to be taught at home...so that when she <Elizabeth Taylor Cadbury> left school she naturally turned to Social work.[107]

Women and men met and married within the same social and philanthropic circle. There are a few indications that a family network of philanthropy existed. For example, the Albright, Cadbury, Impey, Stacey, Harrison, Wilson and Sturge families were all connected through marriage.[108] This familial relationship might have strengthened the ties of philanthropy:

> Our father had often been aided by Mr Smith Harrison in his philanthropic work, and it was a great pleasure to him when his friend's daughter, Isabella Margaret, became engaged to his son, George Stacey, in October, 1882.[109]

Summers[110] asserts that being middle class and married was a necessary condition for philanthropy but not a sufficient one. This was partly so for Birmingham. For instance, there were a number of middle class women in Birmingham with large amounts of spare time who did not engage in philanthropic work. As Summers argues it is belittling to women to suggest that they took up charitable work just to while away the hours or escape from the ennui of their domestic and social life.

Married women certainly predominated within these organisations but a significant minority of single women were also

involved.[111] As with their married counterparts, single women belonged to politically active families or to other members of the organisations.[112] It is not known whether single young women volunteered for these tasks or whether their mothers persuaded them.[113] A few were Poor Law Guardians which suggests that they had independent means as well as a commitment to the 'deserving' poor.[114] Some single women, such as Miss Southall, remained committed to the BLACPYG despite having no immediate relative involved - although they belonged to families noted for their philanthropy.[115] That the majority of the women were married or belonged to families sympathetic to social reform politics undoubtedly made their role within these organisations easier.

Women therefore came from backgrounds in which social reform was on the agenda. To what extent women involved in social welfare politics were adjuncts of their husbands or fathers, performing the function of wife and daughter within their own particular social and charitable context, is difficult to ascertain. From the numbers of Nonconformist women engaged in philanthropy in Birmingham it might be assumed that family expectations would not be of an idle Victorian decorative object who would grace the dinner table and engage in polite, if restricted conversation.

As indicated above, the type of women involved in rescue, reform and preventive work were, if not exceptional,[116] then certainly uncharacteristic of most women in Britain. Firstly they belonged to influential middle class families with Liberal political sympathies; secondly a disproportionate number were

Nonconformists; thirdly they were married to, or belonged to families which supported the civic gospel; fourthly a large number were feminists who worked in a wide range of women centred charities. The religious and political ideology of these women seemed - unlike the managers of the Asylum - to point to a potential unity between middle and working class women. However, it was an ambiguous solidarity seen more through the eyes of the beholder than the beholden.

b) managing the LACFG, the BLACPYG, the GNS and ASH

Women made a valuable contribution to the development of the civic gospel but it was one which was framed within the context of gender: women's work was quite different to men's. A sexual division of labour, based upon the notion of a domestic ideology, operated within the civic gospel. The civic gospel provided the impetus and justification for moral reform when action in the formal political sphere was either considered unacceptable or inappropriate for women. Whereas Nonconformist men engaged in municipal affairs, women's special influence was seen to revolve around what was perceived to be a more private environment. While men tackled the pressing problems of physical disease and squalor through the "gas and water" gospel women grappled with moral disease. At the same time as their husbands cleaned up the physical town, women maintained responsibility for curing moral pollution. Nonetheless, women's participation in the civic gospel - at whatever level - weakened the notion of the separate

spheres.

Prochaska's suggestion that philanthropy became an outlet for self expression[117] does not address the contradictions inherent in charitable activity. Such charitable work encompassed a wide variety of social, economic and political skills, some of which were deemed to be traditionally female whilst others challenged accepted norms. Charity was a mechanism whereby women exercised both a public and political role, albeit within a well regulated domestic arena. Women offered a challenge to the dominant ideology of the public and private spheres. Women demonstrated that they were not idle decorative objects but capable business managers who used their newly acquired skills in other areas. However, this work empowered the benefactors (middle class women) not the beneficiaries. (working class women) The nature of this work, it will be argued, therefore raises further questions about the relationship between gender and class. Potential tensions between feminist politics and class position may have been mediated by the radical influence of religion. It is the links and interstices between class, gender and religion which are particularly revealing about role expectations, the nature of work, patterns of authority and the relationship between the public and the private and it is this which will be discussed in the next section.

The work that women were engaged in for their respective organisations rebuts a common Victorian and Edwardian myth: that of the idle women.[118] Charity, for the women of the LACFG, the

BLACPYG, the GNS and the ASH, was not a trivial pursuit engaged in between social whirls, but serious business. Charity work was a career to which they devoted a large part of their lives. This commitment can be seen in the length of time that women were involved in each organisation, as well as the long hours that they worked.[119] Most of the women tended to work for their respective organisations for an exceptionally long time. They joined in their youth and resigned their post only when they left the area, were ill, retired or died:[120]

> The Committee have received with the greatest regret the resignation of Mrs C D Sturge, who as one of the Lady Visitors of the Prison, has rendered much valuable service for the long period of 25 years; also that of Miss E H Cadbury, whose like services have been rendered for 22 years, and whose kindly offices will be greatly missed.[121]

Perhaps this longevity contributed to the adoption of shared values and attitudes and the development of a consistent approach. It could, of course, be the other way around: that because these women shared a common set of values it bound them together and made them more willing to continue as volunteers.

Unlike the Presidents and the Vice Presidents of the Magdalen Asylum the leaders of women's organisations were deeply committed to the organisations they founded and developed. These leaders played a much more active role in the running of their respective organisations than the executive of the Magdalen Asylum.[122] From this one might deduce that when women took over Presidential or Vice Presidential functions they contributed much

more to the day to day running of the institution than their male counterparts in the Magdalen Asylum. Mrs J E Wilson, who took over the LACFG after Mrs Showell Rogers, remained President from 1881 until her death in 1914. She was no mere figure-head, as with the Calthorpes, as Mrs Wilson had been amongst the pioneers who established the LACFG. Even in later years when Mrs Wilson was physically incapable of taking part in the day to day care of the Home established by the LACFG or of chairing the annual meetings,[123] she took a keen and direct interest in the young women who lived in the institution.[124] Inmates were frequently invited to spend afternoons in her large garden at Wyddrington, gifts were often sent to them and sixpence was given to each one at the Christmas party:

> <Mrs Wilson>...collected funds for it, did dainty needlework to aid its annual sale, besides doing all she could to give its inmates variety and change. The Committee speak of her as a tower of strength on account of her excellent judgment, while the girls, themselves, felt her to be a personal friend, owing to her manifestation of individual interest.[125]

Similarly, Lady Rogers of the GNS and Agatha Stacey contributed to the upkeep of the institutions they managed.[126] This may indicate that women took their roles seriously or may be because no woman was sufficiently famous to make it worthwhile for the organisation to have a non-working figure head.

Committee members also played a much fuller role in reform and prevention work than their counterparts in the Magdalen Asylum. Some Committee members[127] visited the police court weekly in order to talk with the women incarcerated there.[128] Some visited

brothels. This unremunerated work involved a heavy commitment in both time and energy. For the women who managed the LACFG's Home it meant not only a question of attending so many Committee meetings in the year, but of taking a practical, active part in the work of the institution. Each Committee member took a turn at visiting the Home every Thursday throughout the year from 5 a.m. till 9 p.m. in order to entertain ex-inmates in service who spent their 'evenings out' there. Two other Committee members usually spent the whole of one afternoon a week, seeing refractory women, discussing difficult cases and going over accounts; another spent two or three hours every fortnight attending to the clothing accounts of the women sent into service; another visited a great number of those placed in service. Membership of the LACFG was considered to be no sinecure.[129] For some, like Elizabeth Taylor Cadbury, it was almost the equivalent of a full time job. Elizabeth Taylor Cadbury seemed to spend much of her days at one meeting or another:

> Women's mtg. Reports. Discussion; take part afternoon. Free Church Com on Girls F Soc; Dr M Gibson etc. Go to Registry Office and hear of two cooks. Call on M Educational Mtg. N., G and I on omnibus to G.P.O. to catch 10.45pm post.[130]

> Morning, separate sitting on Position of Women. Miss Richardson lunch with me. Afternoon, Education question in joint sitting; much diversity; I spoke. Evening, Home Missions. Evening, Henry back off to Reading; then I to Friends Quarterly Examiner Reunion; then Ed and I chase round to find telephone get through to home to discuss Temperance Meetings etc. all well.[131]

Charity work also undermined the concept of the sexual division

of labour. Between 1887 and 1914, women involved in the various organisations engaged in a wide range of what were, in effect, traditionally masculine activities. The successful management of these charitable organisations not only proved women's competency but demonstrated that women could take charge. Unlike the women who helped run the Magdalen Asylum, women in women only organisations did not work in the shadow of their husbands. Each and every job from the very public to the very private was undertaken by them. The LACFG, for example, was founded, led and managed by women. The President and Vice Presidents, all the Committee, the collectors, the prison and court visitors, the entertainment and education volunteers were all women. Even the honorary doctors, Miss Annie Clarke and Dr Mary Clark, were women. The female managers of this organisation employed other women, Superintendents, Matrons and domestics to look after the female inmates. Similarly, the BLACPYG, the GNS[132] and the Agatha Stacey were initiated, inspired and led by women.[133]

These middle class women gained experience in public speaking, commercial expertise in running organisations, a measure of financial acumen, and administrative, marketing and social welfare skills. Middle class women attended regular Committee meetings to discuss policy and practice, organised and spoke at the Annual Meetings, collected subscriptions and visited those in service. Young single women especially developed their teaching and communication skills at the Homes.[134] Women involved in the BLACPYG also wrote leaflets and articles and campaigned to change the law. Such women not only acted in a public capacity

but gained knowledge of and spoke about matters often considered unseemly for women. Although, as Levine has pointed out, feminists were far less coy about sexual matters in the 1880's than in previous decades,[135] women working in such organisations still challenged orthodox beliefs about femininity quite directly.

Yet such women did not reject a traditionally feminine role. As well as engaging in supposedly 'masculine' activities, Committee members were specifically responsible for jobs generally considered feminine. Sewing circles were set up by the women who managed the LACFG's Home and the GNS to make items of clothing for the inmates and to raise money for the Homes. It is highly unlikely that the men who managed the Magdalen Asylum would engage in such domestic work.[136]

Women's involvement in charity work forces one to reexamine other accepted stereotypes of gender roles at this time. In using their class authority these women refuted their subordinate role and redefined the idea that women needed protecting. Middle class women became the protectors rather than the protected. As charitable middle class women they looked after and cared for other - working class - women in the confines of their respective Homes. Middle class women rescued, reformed and found jobs for impoverished working class women. This empowerment of middle class women, however, was at other women's expense which suggests, yet again, that the common sisterhood envisaged by the

former was unlikely to be realised.

It has been argued that philanthropic women broke class barriers. Summers suggests that whereas men were consolidating their class position, women were forming personal relationships which cut across class barriers.[137] In a similar vein, John claims that employers' wives helped cement social relations between the middle and working class. Indeed, philanthropic women may have helped ensure social stability by alleviating the excesses of female poverty.[138] The Birmingham situation was different. At one and the same time middle class women broke and reinforced class barriers. Middle class women met working class women outside the role of employer but within well defined class boundaries. Philanthropic women spent a considerable time in the Homes and Shelters in the afternoons and evenings when they dispensed advice, talked to what were perceived as 'refractory' young women, taught basic literacy skills and read the Bible:

> She found that each lady connected with the committee took her part in the work among the girls for so many hours every week.[139]

On Sundays and Thursday evenings each week, young women already in service spent their free time at the Home and Shelter where they were given tea and entertained by members of the various Committees.[140] These relationships, however, were not class neutral. Reform and prevention work still displayed the ambiguities associated with middle class women and charity. There was considerable inequality between the middle class charity worker and the working class recipient. Charity, to some extent,

created new social hierarchies for it empowered middle class women while it impeded the development of working class women's consciousness because it kept them in a dependent position.

Charitable work undoubtedly gave middle class women confidence in their own abilities and taught them valuable skills which could be later used to question the social, economic and political order should they so wish. The connections between reform, prevention and the suffrage have already been charted but Birmingham provides a good empirical example of the ways in which this was achieved. Koven's claim that philanthropy was women's avenue into the public sphere[141] applied to Birmingham. Charity work helped women gain the expertise to be employed at a remunerative post in social welfare at some future date.[142] Undoubtedly the monthly reports gathered from the various mistresses involved in institutional work and presented to the Committee must have given some women much needed experience in organising social case work.[143] It could also be argued that women made a significant impact on social policy in that they were the architects of local welfare systems, some of which were still in place in the 1990's.[144] Koven even suggests that women in the private sector helped create the central welfare state as many of the philanthropic initiatives were later taken up by it.[145] She further argues that without such gender awareness welfare states would have been less responsive to women's needs.[146] This is a large claim to make. Birmingham charities continued alongside public welfare but were not supplanted by

it.[147]

Finally, charitable work encourages a further questioning of the notional split between the public world of work and the private world of the home. Lewis suggests that the world of middle class women was divided more rigidly into public and private spheres than that of working class women.[148] Women were seen to occupy the private, unpaid, world of home whereas men occupied the public, paid, world of work. Recent research implies that the dichotomous idea of two separate spheres did not exist so discretely.[149] Instead it is more fruitful to see the public and the private as either a continuum or where two worlds intermingled. Philanthropy was one metaphorical bridge between the two polarities of home and work.[150]

The amalgamation of the public and the private spheres is certainly illustrated in the relationship between charity and domestic work. Domestic servants, employed by the philanthropists to clean their houses, worked in what was considered to be the private world of the home. But because it was someone else's home and because it was paid work it became part of a public domain. On the other hand, instead of remaining in their own private sphere, cleaning their own homes, cooking their own meals, and bringing up their own children, middle class women spent their time in another, more public, albeit unpaid, domestic sphere. Thus the domestic sphere was both private and public. Running their own households involved a private existence whereas organising a 'Home' transferred work to a public domain. From

this example the notion of the public/private split is weakened,the fragility of the distinction between the two recognised and the notion of the domestic ideology challenged.

Equally the division between the public world of work and the more private world of leisure was eroded as charitable work encompassed both. Drawing room meetings, sales of work, dramatic performances, bicycle gymkhanas, tennis tournaments[151] and other forms of entertainment served a multi-purpose in raising money, reinforcing friendship networks and acting as a leisure pursuit. It also kept middle class women safe. For some of the temperance, Nonconformist and upstanding members of the Christian community this was leisure which was respectable, well meaning, charitable, worthy of support and sometimes fun:

> in afternoon went to 'Gymkhana', a bicycle tournament on the Friends Tennis Ground, very amusing - Josephine joined us there.[152]

Philanthropic women might have challenged the central notion of femininity - that of the cherished wife who remained at home, caring for the children - to work in a public space, but it was an idle threat. Women at no time threatened men's jobs so the separation of the spheres remained. The management, social welfare, communication and other skills outlined above were developed within the safe context of someone else's domestic sphere - The Home - so did not challenge women's family and domestic responsibilities. Largely because middle class women worked within an exclusive female arena they did not unduly

undermine men's traditional role.[153] In addition, women's prime responsibility was still managing their own home, looking after their husband's welfare and making sure that domestic life ran smoothly. For instance, Elizabeth Taylor Cadbury had oversight of her domestic arrangements, appointed nannies for her children, employed cooks and looked after her household affairs.[154] Elizabeth Taylor Cadbury still believed that:[155]

> the majority of women have neither the capacity to become the wage-earner for the family, and though men can be very useful creatures in a house, they lack the patience and perseverance necessary successfully to fulfil home duties, so that these various functions are not likely to be changed.[156]

To summarise, the women who worked for the LACFG, the BLACPYG, the ASH and the GNS came from a different religious and political background than the women involved in the Magdalen Asylum. Unlike the Asylum women, they performed a wide variety of tasks often associated with the male sex. To this extent they challenged the accepted stereotype of the Victorian and Edwardian lady. Nevertheless it was a limited challenge because the role of women within the family and the rest of society remained the same as other women. Furthermore, because the distinction between public and private was blurred, because women's charitable work was an extension of their domestic role, and because women managed their own homes, traditional gender assumptions remained unchallenged. There was little conflict when the so called private and public world intermingled. Even though Nonconformist women tested the domestic ideology, charitable work remained an extension of, rather than a liberation from, the home, and

reaffirmed women's subordinate position within Victorian and Edwardian England. Of course, such freedoms were gained at the expense of working class women which indicates that women only organisations did not necessarily offer a great deal of female solidarity.

iii. The Birmingham and Midland Counties' Vigilance Association.

a) membership of the BMCVA

The organisers of the BMCVA shared characteristics in common with both the Magdalen Asylum and the female run associations. On the one hand the BMCVA, like the Magdalen Asylum, was a mixed sex organisation. On the other hand the BMCVA was dominated, like the female run organisations, by Nonconformist middle class Liberals. The BMCVA thus provides a further opportunity to test the importance of, and relationships between, the categories of gender, class and religion. The following section will examine the composition of the BMCVA and its work in order to assess these connections. It will argue that the composition of the BMCVA corresponded with the women's organisations rather than the Magdalen Asylum, but that the work they engaged in did not. Gender issues diminished in significance when considering the membership of the BMCVA but they seemed to be of greater importance when analysing the world of work.

There were great similarities between the BMCVA, the LACFG and

the BLACPYG. Family and friendship groups bound the men and women together.[157] In addition many male members had wives active in other moral reform organisations.[158] Nevertheless, the BMCVA was a distinct organisation. The vast majority of Committee members had no family ties with members of either the BLACPYG or the LACFG: Mrs Osler did not even subscribe to the BMCVA.[159] The Magdalen Asylum, however, had no corresponding relative on the BMCVA Committees, probably because the Asylum declined to join the BMCVA.

Most of the female management of the BMCVA were also members of other charities. Many belonged to the LACFG or the BLACPYG.[160] Six out of the eight women who served on the BMCVA Committee were well known in social and moral reform circles.[161] Both the LACFG and the BLACPYG were also affiliated to the BMCVA whereas the Magdalen Asylum, though invited to join, did not choose to do so.[162]

The managers of the BMCVA shared a similar class background to those in the LACFG and the BLACPYG. Unlike the Magdalen Asylum (which was dominated by clerics, a small number of middle class lay people and a few male aristocrats) the BMCVA was managed by a group from a different class, political and religious background. No aristocrats, for instance, served on the Council or on the Committee. Instead they tended to be men who were middle class manufacturers, merchants, or solicitors.[163] A few clerics and women supported them. There was no evidence to suggest that the working class participated in the BMCVA.[164]

The people involved in the BMCVA held the same political convictions and religious beliefs as those of the all women groups. In contrast, the religious beliefs and political persuasions of the men involved in the BMCVA were quite different from those who managed the Magdalen Asylum. For a start they tended to be Liberals rather than Tories.[165] In addition they tended to be Nonconformists rather than Anglicans.[166]

This mixed group supported an extension of the civic gospel. In this respect, they shared many of the beliefs, values and attitudes of the all women groups. Moral failure and sexual incontinence, it was thought, sprang from poverty. Consequently the BMCVA tried to alleviate immorality by offering ethical as well as economic palliatives. Public water works and gas supplies mixed with private philanthropy, it was hoped, would be a powerful medicine with which to cure the impurities of Birmingham. As a local branch of the National Vigilance Association which aimed to prevent licentiousness and immorality the BMCVA were well placed to put these ideals into practice. The BMCVA therefore tried to flush away impurity in a similar way to that in which water cleaned up the sewage system - by tackling the source of the problem. Consequently, like the women involved in the LACFG and the BLACPYG, they tended to be heavily committed to social reform politics:[167]

> Mr Tyndall holds strongly to the opinion that every citizen should give up at least some portion of his time to work in aid of the welfare of his fellow citizens, and

> the promotion of the good government of the town of which we are so proud.[168]

Thus the similarities between the BMCVA and the women's organisations tend to suggest that class, religion and politics overshadowed gender. The Magdalen Asylum and the BMCVA, despite being mixed organisations shared little in common. In contrast the women's organisations and the BMCVA shared political beliefs and religious principles which transcended gender difference.

b) managing the BMCVA

On the other hand, gender was critical in the practice of the BMCVA. Women may have been encouraged to participate in the sexually mixed Council and Executive Committees but the BMCVA's hierarchical structure, like that of the Magdalen Asylum, was gendered. It consisted of a male President, male officers and a mostly male Council and Committees. Only one woman served on the fifteen strong Council and women accounted for seven out of twenty nine Executive Committee members in 1888.[169] Women did not pose a numerical threat to the masculine ascendancy because men dominated the upper echelons of the BMCVA and were over-represented in the Council and the Executive Committee.

It is difficult to get a sense of any sexual division of labour from either the Annual Reports or Occasional Papers. Superficially, gender differences appeared less explicit in the practice of the BMCVA than that of the Asylum. Unlike the Asylum and women only organisations, the BMCVA had an almost totally

public face. All of its work was based on gaining maximum publicity for its cause. The three aspects of its work - the educational, legal, and office[170] - dealt with different aspects of social purity work. Men and women ostensibly engaged in all sections. But when men and women worked together, men exercised command whereas women played a subordinate role.

The practices of the BMCVA and the Magdalen Asylum were both structured along gendered lines even though those of the BMCVA were less sharply delineated. Both men and women spoke at public meetings in the BMCVA but not on the same topics and not for the same amount of time. Men spoke first, for longer than women, and on political issues. As President, R Cadbury delivered the opening address and chaired the Annual Meetings.[171] Men such as Reverend Houghton moved the adoption of the Annual Report which was seconded by other men.[172] On the other hand, apart from a few well known individual women like Mrs C D Sturge, Agatha Stacey, Elizabeth Cadbury there were few instances of women speaking in public. Women such as Mrs C D Sturge did speak quite often at annual public meetings but her speeches were reported last and were significantly shorter than those of men's.[173] Similarly, women rarely spoke in the Public meetings in chapels, school rooms, Mission Halls and lecture theatres but tended to address women only meetings. In addition, the speeches of women often focused on women's concerns with regard to social purity rather than general issues. Furthermore, the women who belonged to the BMCVA were powerful figures. Agatha Stacey had

founded her own Homes; Miss E H Cadbury was the backbone of the LACFG; Miss Annie Clark one of a few female practising doctors; Mrs R W Dale the widow of Mr R W Dale the notable social gospel advocate; and Mrs C D Sturge a well known political activist. If these strong characters failed to make much impact on the public face of the BMCVA then gender must surely be an important factor in the way the work was organised.

Men did not conspire to keep women from speaking in public. On the contrary, there were constant pleas in the Annual Reports and the Occasional Papers for women to come forward as public speakers:

> The help of ladies was needed to speak at Mothers Meetings on the dangers to sons and daughters which accrued from wrongful upbringing. They also desired the services of lady speakers for public meetings.[174]

However, these pleas were made by women speakers themselves rather than the men in the organisation. Furthermore women were mostly encouraged to speak at single sex rather than mixed meetings.

Men, not women, were responsible for the management and administration of the BMCVA. And a few men were paid. One of these posts, the Secretary's, earned its incumbent £150 per annum. Secretaries such as Reverend W Wastell, read and wrote the Annual Reports which gave a resume of the work of the past year.[175] Men also acted as Treasurers. Mr Bishop, for instance, was in charge of the financial affairs of the BMCVA, organised

the statements of accounts and the subscription lists.[176] In women only organisations, women had engaged in a wide variety of tasks which included managerial responsibility. They were not offered the same opportunity in the BMCVA.[177]

On the other hand, women were actively encouraged to become responsible for office work which involved dealing with individual cases, offering advice, writing letters and sorting out problems. This type of activity was seen to be much more suitable for women than men because it was an extension of women's nurturing role. Case work could be seen as part of women's sphere because it was a private activity which involved a caring approach to individuals:

> The Committee are deeply impressed with the importance of the scope that such work opens for the exercise of the aid which only women can effectually render to their bewildered, troubled, sinning sisters.[178]

Consequently, one is led to believe that gender rather than class, politics or religion, played a major part in the allocation of jobs within mixed organisations. Women and men who belonged to the BMCVA had traditional roles reinforced in charity work. When men and women worked together, men tended to take on a supervisory role while women were relegated to a subordinate one. Nevertheless the roles ascribed to women were never as rigid as those at the Magdalen Asylum and offered a slight opportunity to break with the feminine stereotype of the period.

Conclusion

Neither gender, class nor religion are adequate categories with which to understand the composition of the organisations and the work of social reformers in Birmingham. It therefore proved critical to analyse the subtle relationships between all of these theoretical constructs. In some circumstances, gender appeared the most crucial category. In the mixed organisations, the Magdalen Asylum and the BMCVA, women tended to play a more subordinate role than in single sex ones. Gender, however, was mediated by class, religion and politics. For example, BLACPYG Nonconformist, Liberal women tended to share more in common with the men who belonged to the BMCVA than the Anglican women who worked for the Magdalen Asylum.

Similarly, class was equally problematic. Class was important in the allocation of roles within the Magdalen Asylum but less so in the Nonconformist organisations. Whereas the aristocracy dominated the higher echelons of the Asylum - but did very little actual work - the other organisations adopted a more equitable distribution of tasks, at least as far as men were concerned.

Religious doctrine also played a part. People who joined and worked in the different organisations were motivated as much by religious doctrines as by gender sympathies, class values and political beliefs. Consequently one is forced to reassess the relevance of classifying each of these categories as discrete

entities. No neat distinction can be made between class, gender and religion - what has been encountered in this chapter is a much more unstable set of concepts than is usually presumed and presented.

In the following sections it will be demonstrated how the gender, class and religious background of the above helped to shape the institutions, associations and organisations they founded and developed. In the next section reform institutions founded by the Church of England and the LACFG will be discussed.

Notes and References

(1) Committee members were elected by subscribers who donated over a guinea per annum. (MA Annual Reports, 1860-1914.)

(2) There were approximately ten men on the Committee.

(3) There were approximately ten women on each Committee.

(4) Minor changes were made in the organisational structure between 1860-1914. In 1872 a separate finance committee was established and between 1889-1901 the Ladies' and the male Committees were amalgamated. After 1901, however, the Committees reverted to their former sexual division and separated again into all male and all female ones. The Annual Reports do not specify why these changes occurred. It could have been for administrative efficiency, because volunteers were declining in numbers or because of the wishes of the women members. (MA Annual Reports, 1860-1914.)

(5) MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.

(6) The Earl of Dartmouth, the Lords Calthorpe and Leigh acted as Vice Presidents throughout this period. (MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.)

(7) The newly appointed Vice Presidents included Sir James Sawyer, Lady Sawyer, Reverend J C Blissard and Mrs Blissard. (MA Annual Reports, 1903-1914.)

(8) See Chart 1 at the end of these footnotes and Appendix 1 for further details.

(9) D Cannadine, The Aristocracy and the Towns in the 19th Century: a case study of the Calthorpes and Birmingham. D. Phil, 1975, p71.

(10) Edgbastonia, June 1893, pp113-118.

(11) Edgbastonia, June 1890, pp81-85.

(12) D Cannadine, The Aristocracy and the Towns, 1975, p73.

(13) One of the Lord Calthorpes was President of three societies, Vice President of twenty four and governor of four in the 1840's. (D Cannadine, The Aristocracy and the Towns, 1975, p68.)

(14) See J V Beckett, The Aristocracy in England, 1660-1914, Basil Blackwell, 1986 and D Cannadine, Lords and Landlords, the Aristocracy and the Towns, 1774-1967, Leicester University Press, 1980 for a fuller discussion of the role of aristocratic benevolence.

(15) Cannadine has claimed that "It would thus have been bad politics, to say nothing of crass ingratitude, if the family had not given something back in terms of public service." (D Cannadine, The Aristocracy and the Towns, 1975, p71.)

(16) See D Cannadine, The Aristocracy and the Towns, 1975, for a discussion of the Calthorpes' charitable involvement.

(17) Frederick Calthorpe succeeded to the title in 1868. (Edgbastonia, August 1910, p143.)

(18) D Cannadine, Lords and Landlords, 1980.

(19) D Cannadine, The Aristocracy and the Towns, 1975, p102. As mentioned above the income from the Edgbaston estates was in the region of £25,000 per annum.

(20) MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.

(21) D Cannadine, The Aristocracy and the Towns, 1975, p102. Cannadine also notes that the Calthorpes' income at this time was still over £25,000 per annum.

(22) MA Annual Reports, 1893-1914.

(23) For example Mr Hasluck was a Company Director, Mr Dixon a coal merchant, Mr Gem and the Chances were all merchants. See Appendix 1 for further details.

(24) Canon Strange, Reverend Perowne and Reverend Spooner were all influential Executive Committee members. See Appendix 1 for further details.

(25) Edgbastonia, January 1895, pp1-6.

(26) MA Annual Reports, 1889-1914.

(27) In 1889 there were three clergy out of ten men who served on the Asylum Committee. In 1890 clergy numbers grew to six. (MA Annual Reports, 1889-1901.)

(28) Canon Strange, Reverend Burrows, Reverend Lea were all Oxbridge men.(Crockfords, 1860-1914.)

(29) Crockfords, 1860-1914. According to Peacock, however, few Birmingham clergy had private incomes. The majority of clergy were poor. (R Peacock, "The 1892 Birmingham Religious Census", in Religion in the Birmingham Area, Essays in the Sociology of Religion, University of Birmingham, 1975, p19.)

(30) For example Reverend Lea had married an aristocratic wife and supported his parish from his own income. Reverend Spooner was a cousin of the Calthorpes by marriage. See Appendix 1 for further details.

(31) The Reverends Diggle, Perowne and Denton Thomas were also well known Evangelicals. Reverend Lea was a leading Evangelical who held very firm views on church ritual: "He was a most unflinching and decided Evangelical, and, though kindly disposed towards anyone who held different opinions, he was always opposed to anything approaching Ritualistic tendencies. He had very plain services in his own church." (Edgbastonia, June 1883, p83.)

(32) The pyramidal structure of the Church of England enabled the Evangelical Bishop Ryder to appoint Evangelical Arch-Deacons who in turn appointed Evangelical ministers.

(33) See R Peacock, "The 1892 Birmingham Religious Census", 1975, p12.

(34) See L Davidoff and C Hall, Family Fortunes, Hutchinson, 1987, pp76-95.

(35) K Heasman, Evangelicals in Action, Geoffrey Bles, 1962, pp15-27.

(36) See G Best, "Evangelicalism and the Victorians", in A Symondson, The Victorian Crisis of Faith, SPCK, 1970, Chapter 2; K Heasman, Evangelicals in Action, Geoffrey Bles, 1962, pp15-28; and G Parsons, Religion in Victorian Britain, 1988, pp8-37 for a discussion of the role of personal salvation for Evangelical Christians.

(37) Daily Gazette, March 14th, 1876. It proved difficult to identify the religious convictions of the lay members of the Magdalen Asylum but one can make some inferences. Lord Calthorpe, belonged to the Church of England. (D Cannadine, The Aristocracy and the Towns, 1975, p67.) One can assume that the other Vice Presidents and Committee members either belonged to or sympathised with the Church of England as the Asylum was founded

by the church.

(38) See Chart 1 and Appendix 1 for further details.

(39) Edgbastonia, June 1890, pp81-85.

(40) Edgbastonia, August 1893, pp114-118.

(41) Richard Spooner, Trustee, was a Conservative M.P. while Edward Gem, member of the Executive Committee, voted Conservative. See Chart 1 and Appendix 1 for further details.

(42) Richard Spooner, Conservative M.P. was the father of Reverend Spooner who served on the Asylum Committee. See Appendix 1 for further details.

(43) G Parsons, Religion in Victorian Britain, Volume 11, 1988, p40.

(44) MA Annual Reports, 1860-1914.

(45) K Heasman, Evangelicals in Action, 1962, p18.

(46) Edgbastonia, July 1905, pp143-149. Reverend Denton Thompson, however, was allegedly one of few Anglican vicars who worked with the Nonconformists.

(47) Mrs Cooper, Mrs Goode, Mrs Hasluck, Mrs Ingram, Mrs Lea, Mrs Chance, Mrs Blissard and Mrs Perowne all had husbands who served on the Executive Committee. See Chart 1 and Appendix 1 for further details.

(48) Mrs Sophia Lea, for example, was the daughter of a Baron but on marriage became a vicar's wife. On the other hand, Sir James Sawyer's wife was elevated to the status of a Lady because of her husband's knighthood. See Appendix 1 for further details.

(49) Lady Sawyer was ruling Councillor of the Ladywood Habitation of the Primrose League but there is no further evidence of other women taking such a leading part in Conservative politics.

(50) For example, the contribution of Mrs Lea was viewed in a gendered way. She was seen as helping her husband rather than acting independently:

> Mrs Lea for instance was "in all things an active and devoted wife, seconding her husband's efforts in promoting education; visiting and assisting the poorer members of his flock, and taking unwearied interest in the schools and other benevolent institutions in the parish.(Edgbastonia, June 1883, p82.)

(51) See A V John, Our Mothers' Land, University of Wales Press, 1991, Chapter 2, for a discussion of this point in relation to

Welsh women philanthropists.

(52) For example, Mrs Lea continued on the Committee after the death of Reverend Lea, Mrs Blissard joined in 1875 before her husband while Mrs Evans' and Mrs Hare's husbands did not serve on the Magdalen Asylum Committee. (MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.)

(53) R Peacock, "The 1892 Birmingham Religious Census", 1975, p12. In 1891 when Perowne became Bishop of Worcester he regenerated the parish of Birmingham but did not involve himself in the Asylum. (MA Annual Reports, 1891-1914.)

(54) MA Annual Reports, 1860-1914.

(55) D Cannadine, The Aristocracy and the Towns, 1975.

(56) When Frederick Calthorpe became Liberal M.P. for Birmingham, until he become Lord, he apparently spent no more time in Parliament than he did at Edgbaston. Frederick Calthorpe was merely carrying on the family tradition: "All his life the third Lord was an absentee; so was the fourth Lord after 1862; the fifth Lord just did not care; the sixth Lord and his brother, after 1893, were not only absentees but aging absentees." (D Cannadine, The Aristocracy and the Towns, 1975, p114.)

(57) Edgbastonia, August, 1910.

(58) Edgbastonia, August 1893, p113.

(59) D Cannadine, The Aristocracy and the Towns, 1975, p110.

(60) Town Crier, quoted Cannadine, Lords and Landlords, 1980, p191.

(61) Interestingly, apart from a few notable exceptions, both the membership of the male and the Ladies' Committee fluctuated much more than the Executive. This may have been because they participated in the daily work of the Asylum which was less attractive and prestigious or may have been because those in the lower echelons of the clergy tended to move around more than those in the important posts. Reverend Lea, for instance, was Vicar of St George's for 18 years. (MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.)

(62) Canon Strange, for instance, was largely instrumental in resuscitating the flagging energies of the Magdalen Asylum. (Evening Despatch, January 21st, 1905.

(63) MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.

(64) See G Parsons, Religion in Victorian Britain, 1988, p20 for a discussion of the separate spheres of men and women within the Evangelical tradition.

(65) MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.

(66) MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.

(67) MA Annual Report, 1886, p5.

(68) Birmingham Gazette, March 15th 1862.

(69) See L Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History", Journal of American History, June 1988, pp9-39 for a discussion of the origins, development and critique of the concepts of the public and private spheres.

(70) See Catherine Hall, White, Male and Middle Class, Chapter 3 for a discussion of the formation of Victorian domestic ideology.

(71) Both R Wallace, Organise, Organise, Organise, 1991, Chapter X1, writing about Wales, and J Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society, 1980 have demonstrated that the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts and support for constitutional women's suffrage were put forward by the same group of women.

(72) See Chart 2 at the end of the footnotes and Appendix 1 for further details of women who supported the suffrage movement.

(73) For example Mrs Impey forwarded the suffrage petition in 1875 to John Bright. See Chart 2 and Appendix 1 for further details.

(74) Mrs Ashford, Mrs Wilson, Mrs Kenway, Mrs C D Sturge and Mrs C T Bishop were well known advocates of repeal. (The Sentinel, 1885, p54; The Shield, April 17th, 1886, pp75-6; The Shield, May 10th 1910, p38. See Appendix 1 for further details)

(75) G and L Johnson, Josephine Butler, an Autobiographical Memoir, J W Arrowsmith, 1928, p38.

(76) The Shield, May 1910, p38.

(77) See P Levine, Feminist Lives in Victorian England, Basil Blackwell, 1990 for an analysis of a national women's network based upon familial and friendship groups. See also J Rendall, Equal or Different, Basil Blackwell, 1987 pp112-138 for a discussion of the importance of women's friendships in political movements.

(78) Women lived in Pakenham Road, Wheeleys Road, Frederick Road, Hagley Road, Beaufort Road. These roads were close together.

(79) Elizabeth Cadbury's diaries point out that women met at dinner parties. For example, Elizabeth Cadbury visited Mrs Hallowes on July 2nd, 1889, Mrs Sturge, April 11th 1890 and Mrs Wilson on January 12th 1890. (Personal Diaries of Elizabeth Cadbury, 1880-1914.)

(80) For example, Agatha Stacey was Vice President of the

BLACPYG, served on the GNS Committee, anonymously donated the rent for the GNS and also established and became Secretary of the Home for the 'feeble-minded' which later bore her name; Mrs Hallewell Rogers was a member of both the BLACPYG Executive and Secretary of the GNS; Mrs Bishop served on both the BLACPYG and the GNS Committees. (BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914; Shelter Annual Reports, 1888-1914; ASH Annual Reports, 1882-1914.) See Chart 2 and Appendix 1 for further details.

(81) P Levine, Feminist Lives in Victorian England, 1990.

(82) See Chart 2 and Appendix 1.

(83) The Married Women's Property Acts had, by this time, given middle class women some economic rights in relation to their own property. Sarah Bowler, great grand-daughter of Mrs Impey, maintained that Quaker fathers endowed their daughters with an income held in trust to assure their economic independence. This was at times considerable. (Oral interview, Sarah Bowler, 1994.)

(84) Mrs Ashford, the Cadbury's, Mrs Rabone, Mrs Hallewell Rogers, Mrs Tangye and Mrs Wilson were all married to manufacturers. Some, like Mrs Harrison, were married to accountants or solicitors whose husbands did the accounts. Those married to clergy such as Mrs Dale and Mrs Vince were married to Nonconformist vicars or, as in the case of Mrs Knox, married to vicars who supported women's suffrage. See Chart 2 and Appendix 1 for further details.

(85) For example Mrs Arthur Phillps was forced to resign in 1896 as Secretary of the BLACPYG and take a remunerative post because she could no longer afford to undertake unpaid charitable work. (BLACPYG, Annual Reports, 1887-1897.)

(86) See J Lewis, Women in England, 1870-1950, Wheatsheaf Books, 1984, Chapter 3, for a discussion of the role of middle class women.

(87) See Appendix 1 for further details.

(88) Mrs Beale, Mrs Rogers and Mrs Vardy were married to men who became Lord Mayors, Mrs Ashford was married to a Liberal councillor, Mrs Impey's husband was a Liberal candidate whereas Mrs Lee's husband was a Liberal M.P.. (Edgbastonia, 1881-1916.)

(89) A small number of individuals such as Mrs Osler, President of the Women's Auxiliary of the Liberal Party were Liberals in their own right. See Chart 2 and Appendix 1 for further details.

(90) See Chart 2 and Appendix 1 for further details.

(91) Mrs Beale and Mrs Lea were married to Unitarians, Mrs Bishop a Baptist and Mrs Vince a Methodist. See Appendix 1 for further details.

(92) The Cadburys were well known Quakers. But so too were Mrs Albright, Mrs Ashford, Mrs Impey, Mrs Littleboy, Miss Southall, Mrs Sturge, Mrs Tangye, Miss Wilson and Mrs Wilson. However, not all women shared a religious belief. (Annual Monitor, 1900-1914.) All of the women traced so far were Nonconformists but some women who have not been located may have been Church of England or Roman Catholic. Nevertheless women were bound together by a common approach to reform and prevention work. This may suggest that gender was a fundamental organising principle but it could equally reflect a shared moral order and class loyalty. Unfortunately there is no evidence to suggest any disagreement between women as the Annual Reports of the all women organisations tended to be, as with Annual Reports in general, rather bland and uncontroversial.

(93) A Briggs, Victorian Cities, 1963, p205.

(94) See G Parsons, Religion in Victorian Britain, 1988, p46.

(95) Christ, as both God and man, was seen to reflect God's interest in the temporal world.

(96) G Parsons, Religion in Victorian Britain, 1988, p48.

(97) See G Parsons, Religion in Victorian Britain, 1988, pp40-49.

(98) G Parsons, Religion in Victorian Britain, 1988, p47.

(99) G Parsons, Religion in Victorian Britain, 1988, p29.

(100) Mr Beale, Mr Bishop, Mr G Cadbury, Mr Harrison, Mr Lee, Mr Osler, Mr H and Mr S Rogers, Charles Sturge, George Tangye and Mr Wilson were all well known philanthropists as the following quotes, albeit written by sympathetic reporters, illustrate:

> ...difficult to name a branch of municipal, educational or philanthropic work with which he was not closely associated. (of Mr Beale, Birmingham Mail, Sept 2nd 1912, newspaper cuttings collection, Birmingham Library.)
>
> ...generous supporter of educational and philanthropic causes(of Mr T G Lee, Birmingham Post, June 22nd 1916, newspaper cuttings collection, Birmingham Library.)
>
> ...from earliest manhood, Mr Osler had taken a deep interest in political and social questions. (Birmingham Evening Despatch, October 1st 1903, newspaper cuttings collection, Birmingham Library.)
>
> Of the provisions which Mr Tangye has made for the social, moral and physical welfare of his work people we know a great deal ... Of the many princely gifts of the Tangye brothers we cannot trust ourselves to speak. All Birmingham and thousands out of it, know of their good deeds. They have established scholarships, supported

hospitals and given liberally to deserving public institutions. (Factory Herald, July 8th 1880, newspaper cuttings collection, Birmingham Library.)

Not every newspaper was so adulatory. For an example of an alternative view to the usual eulogies about famous men and women see a satirical poem about Birmingham philanthropists in The Town Crier, January, 1886, pp10-11:

...For John was of that modest kind
Who goodness does by stealth,
For well he knew that if found out
A man of so much wealth
Inclined to give to charity
Might pose before the town
As one who wished to give himself
Distinction and renown...

(101) The local press tended to see women in a supportive capacity as the following quote about Mrs Osler suggests:

Her enthusiasm and ability in the advocacy of many political and social questions are well known, and her name will always be associated with Mr Osler's as one who supported him at all times and by word and deed in the causes which both held dear. (Edgbastonia, November 1903.)

Mrs Osler was a well known political activist in her own right who might not have shared these sentiments.

(102) The position of women in the Society of Friends, anonymous unpublished paper, u/d, Woodbrooke College.

(103) In Wales, Rose Crawshay was heavily involved in the suffrage movement and women's rights despite the difference between her and her husband's politics. (A V John, Our Mothers' Land, 1991, pp56-58.)

(104) Obituary of Catherine Wilson, Annual Monitor, 1915. Unlike some of the previous papers which reported women as ably seconding their husbands, the Annual Monitor, viewed women in their own right. The Annual Monitor was a Quaker journal.

(105) See P Levine, "Love, Friendship, and Feminism in Later 19th Century England", Women's Studies International Forum, 1990, pp63-78 for an analysis of the relationship between feminism and kinship.

(106) See Appendix 1 for further details.

(107) Author unknown, unpublished paper, September 1938, in Various newscuttings of a political nature relating to Elizabeth Cadbury, 1895-1949.

(108) See Appendix 1 for further details.

(109) Biography of Arthur Albright, 1811-1900, privately published.

(110) A Summers, "A Home from Home - Women's Philanthropic Work in the Nineteenth Century" in S Burman, Fit Work for Women, Croom Helm, 1979, p38.

(111) Miss Stacey, Miss M L Wilson, Miss Taylor, Miss Brooks, Miss Southall were amongst the single women who worked for the LACFG, the BLACPYG, the GNS and/or ASH. See Chart 2 and Appendix 1 for further details.

(112) Miss M L Wilson was the daughter of the leader of the LACFG and the niece of Agatha Stacey, Miss Elizabeth Cadbury and Miss Southall from well known philanthropic families while Miss Brook's mother served as Treasurer of a section of the BLACPYG. See Appendix 1 for further details.

(113) It is interesting to note that Miss Brooks dropped out of the BLACPYG a year after her mother died. She could, of course, have got married and continued charitable work under another name. See Appendix 1 for further details.

(114) Agatha Stacey and Anna Lloyd, for example, were Poor Law Guardians before 1894. Until this time, property qualifications were necessary in elections. See P Hollis, Women in Public, The Women's Movement, 1850-1900, George Allen and Unwin, 1981, Chapter 5 for a discussion of the work of women Poor Law Guardians.

(115) It was extremely difficult, if not impossible, to locate information on single women. Married women were sometimes traced through their husbands. Single women, unless they belonged to especially important families were impossible to trace. Furthermore there were also some married women such as Mrs Herbert, Mrs Francis and Mrs Hudson for whom no corresponding husband could be found. These women therefore remain invisible.

(116) A V John, Our Mothers' Land, 1991, p62 has queried the notion of 'extraordinary' women.

(117) F Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy in Victorian England, 1980, p5.

(118) F Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy, 1980, p224.

(119) It could, of course, be argued that longevity reflected a lack of commitment but the amount of work that a lot of the women did for their organisations suggests otherwise.

(120) Miss Sarah Cadbury, who acted as a fund raiser and police court visitor died in 1908 after twenty two years service on the LACFG. In the same year Mrs Sturge and Miss E H Cadbury resigned

due to failing strength. In 1912 Miss S Scott, who founded and developed the LACFG's Recreation Committee died after many years of devoted work. Mrs Showell Rogers who had visited the Police Courts and lock-ups for over thirty years retired in 1913 due to ill health. (LACFG, Annual Reports, 1891-1914.)

(121) Report of the Visiting Committee of H.M. Prison, January 1909.

(122) LACFG Annual Reports, 1891-1914; BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914; GNS Annual Reports, 1888-1914; ASH Annual Reports, 1892-1914.

(123) After 1891 the Annual Reports of the LACFG rarely report the presence of Mrs Wilson. (LACFG Annual Reports, 1890-1914.)

(124) LACFG Annual Reports, 1891-1914.

(125) The Friend, 1st May, 1914, p307.

(126) For instance, Mrs Rogers visited the GNS at least twice a week and attended meetings in connection with the shelter. (NUWW Quarterly Magazine, March, 1908 p74.)

(127) Notably Mrs C D Sturge, Mrs Bishop and Miss S Cadbury.

(128) LACFG Annual Reports, 1891-1914.

(129) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1902, pp10-13.

(130) Personal Diaries of Elizabeth Taylor Cadbury, 1880-1914, Thursday, May 25th, 1899.

(131) Personal Diaries of Elizabeth Taylor Cadbury, Tuesday May 29th, 1899.

(132) There was one exception to this when Sir Hallewell Rogers became President of the GNS, an honorary role, on the death of his wife in 1908. (BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1908-1914.)

(133) Men were involved in ASH under a female Presidency between 1892-1903. After that, men ceased to play any role at all. (ASH Annual Reports, 1892-1904.)

(134) Classes, at the Home managed by the BLACPYG, were taught by M Whitlock, Miss Wilson, Misses Banks, Miss Rabone and Miss Smith. (BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914)

(135) P Levine, Feminist Lives in Victorian England, 1990, Chapter 5.

(136) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914; GNS Annual Reports, 1888-1914.

(137) A Summers, "A Home From Home - Women's Philanthropic Work

in the Nineteenth Century", 1979, p39.

(138) A V John, Our Mothers' Land, 1991, p44 has demonstrated how Lady Charlotte, unwittingly or otherwise, helped in the social cohesion of Dowlais, Wales.

(139) Birmingham Daily Post, February 5th, 1905.

(140) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(141) S Koven, "Borderlands: Women, Voluntary Action, and Child Welfare in Britain, 1840 to 1914", S Koven and S Michel, Mothers of a New World, Routledge, 1993.

(142) For example, Mrs Phillp took up a remunerative post on the death of her husband in 1896.

(143) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(144) The Agatha Stacey Homes did not close until 1948 (ASH Annual Report, 1948) whereas the GNS did not close until 1991. (Oral interview, Salvation Army Officer, London, 1994.)

(145) S Koven, "Borderlands: Women, Voluntary Action, and Child Welfare in Britain, 1840 to 1914", 1993, p124.

(146) S Koven, "Borderlands: Women, Voluntary Action, and Child Welfare in Britain, 1840-1914", 1993, pp94-129.

(147) See A Briggs, Victorian Cities, 1963, pp219-243 for an example of the civic gospel at work in municipal politics.

(148) J Lewis, Women in England, 1984, p75.

(149) See L Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History", 1988, pp9-39, for a discussion of the classification of the spheres.

(150) See S Koven, "Borderlands: Women, Voluntary Action, and Child Welfare in Britain, 1840-1914", 1993, p95 for a discussion of the role of philanthropy in bridging the gap between the private and the public.

(151) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914; GNS Annual Reports, 1888-1914.

(152) Diary of Elizabeth Cadbury, October 10th, 1896.

(153) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914; GNS Annual Reports, 1888-1914; ASH Annual Reports, 1892-1914.

(154) Personal Diaries of Elizabeth Taylor Cadbury, 1880-1914.

(155) Mrs Dale also, according to her son, protected her famous husband from household cares and petty anxieties.(A W W Dale, The

Life of R W Dale of Birmingham, Hodder and Stoughton, 1899, 1905.

(156) Daily News, August 13th, 1926, newspaper cuttings collection, Birmingham Library.

(157) Two members of the BMCVA, Mrs C T Bishop and Mrs Jenkyn Brown, were married to men on its Executive Committee. (BMCVA Annual Reports, 1886-1894.)

(158) In particular, Mrs J E Wilson was a leading figure in the LACFG, Mrs C T Bishop the BLACPYG and the GNS and Mrs Cadbury the BLACPYG. See Chart 3 and Appendix 1.

(159) BMCVA Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(160) See Appendix 1 for evidence that women belonged to different organisations.

(161) See Appendix 1 for evidence that women were involved in social reform politics.

(162) BMCVA Annual Reports, 1887-1893.

(163) For example Mr J W Wilson was a chemical manufacturer, Mr Martineau was a merchant, Mr Tangye was a manufacturer. See Appendix 1 for further details.

(164) Vigilance Record, 1887-1914; BMCVA Annual Reports, 1887-1914; Occasional Papers of the BMCVA, 1887-1914; BMCVA Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(165) Mr G Cadbury was a leading financier of the Liberal Party who stood well on its left. Mr Baker, Mr Bishop and Mr Wilson were also Liberals, and later Liberal Unionists. See Chart 3 at the end of the footnotes and Appendix 1 for further details.

(166) Mr R Cadbury, Mr G Cadbury, Mr J W Wilson were all Quakers; Mr C D Bishop a Baptist; Mr Tyndall a Unitarian. See Appendix 1 for further details.

(167) Mr J E Baker, one time Lord Mayor, taught at Severn Street School and supported charities such as the Rubery Hill Asylum. Mr E L Tyndall supported the Dissenting Charity School, the Ear and Throat Hospital, the Homeopathic Hospital and the Temperance Movement. (Edgbastonia, 1881-1916) See Chart 3 and Appendix 1 for further examples.

(168) Edgbastonia, January, 1899, p5. Similarly, C T Bishop who was Chair of the Watch Committee had a high profile in the BMCVA.

(169) This gender imbalance increased rather than diminished over time. By 1893 neither Agatha Stacey nor Mrs Ashford remained on the Committee. As no other woman replaced them the total number of women on the Committee was reduced to six. However, to be fair

the Council and Executive Committee also dropped in number. No reasons were given for this change. (BMCVA Annual Reports, 1887-1893.)

(170) Office work meant case work.

(171) Vigilance Record, July 1897, p7.

(172) Vigilance Record, March 1893, p13.

(173) BMCVA Occasional Papers, 1887-1914.

(174) Mrs C D Sturge, BMCVA Occasional Paper, March 1889, p3.

(175) BMCVA Annual Reports, 1887-1893.

(176) BMCVA Annual Reports, 1887-1893.

(177) BMCVA Annual Reports, 1887-1893.

(178) BMCVA Occasional Paper, 1893, p8.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	MEMBERSHIP MAGDALEN ASYLUM							
2								
3	NAME	DATES	POST	OTHER ORGANISATIONS			RELIGION	POLITICS
4								
5	REV BLISSARD	D 1904	VP	COS			C OF E	
6	MRS BLISSARD		VP				C OF E	
7	CAN BOWLBY		CTTEE	WHITE CROSS	TEMPERANCE	SCHOOL BOARD	C OF E	
8	MRS BREAY	D 1870	L CTTEE					
9	MRS CALDICOTT		L CTTEE					
10	LORD CALTHORPE		VP'S				C OF E	CONS
11	MRS COOPER		L CTTEE					
12	EARL DARTMOUTH		VP					
13	REV DIGGLE		CTTEE				C OF E	
14	DIXON		CTTEE				C OF E	
15	GEM		TRUSTEE	BLIND	SLAVERY	EAR/THROAT		CONS
16	EARL HARROWBY		VP					
17	HASLUCK		CTTEE				C OF E	
18	MRS HASLUCK		L CTTEE					
19	REV HEALEY		CTTEE				C OF E	
20	INGRAM		CTTEE					
21	MRS INGRAM		L CTTEE					
22	REV LEA	1804-1883	CTTEE				C OF E	
23	MRS LEA		L CTTEE	EDUCATION			C OF E	
24	LORD LEIGH		VP					
25	MARSHALL	B1850	CTTEE	NURSING SOC				
26	REV PARKER		CTTEE				C OF E	
27	REV PEROWNE		CTTEE				C OF E	
28	MRS PEROWNE		L CTTEE	MOTHERS UNIO			C OF E	
29	REV SHARPE		CTTEE				C OF E	

Dates = Birth and death date
Post = Post held in the organisation
Other organisations = Membership of other organisations
Suffrage = Membership of suffrage organisation
Religion = Religious belief
Politics = Political belief

Chart One

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
30	LADY SAWYER		VP					CONS
31	SPOONER		TRUSTEE					CONS MP
32	REV SPOONER	D1884	CTTEE	DEAF AND DUMB	BLIND		C OF E	CONS
33	REV CAN STRANGE		TRUSTEE	WHITE CROSS	NSPCC	GIRLS EDUC	C OF E	
34	STRANGE		TRUSTEE					
35	REV THOMPSON		CTTEE				C OF E	

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	MEMBERSHIP OF LACFG, BLACPYG, GNS, ASH										
2											
3	NAME	DATES	ORGANISATIONS					SUFFRAGE	RELIGION	POLITICS	OTHER RELATIVES
4											
5	ADDINSELL		LACFG				BMCVA				
6	ALBRIGHT				GNS	ASH	BMCVA	SUFF	QUAKER		YES
7	MS ALBRIGHT				GNS	ASH			QUAKER		
8	ASHFORD				GNS		BMCVA	SUFF	QUAKER		YES
9	BEALE			BLACPYG					UNITARIAN		YES
10	BISHOP		LACFG	BLACPYG	GNS		BMCVA		BAPTIST	LIB	YES
11	BRACEY	PLG		BLACPYG							
12	MS BROOKS			BLACPYG	GNS						
13	BROOKS	D1899		BLACPYG	GNS	ASH	BMCVA	SUFF			
14	MS E CADBURY	1832-1909	LACFG	BLACPYG			BMCVA		QUAKER		YES
15	B CADBURY		LACFG						QUAKER		YES
16	G CADBURY	1858-1951		BLACPYG			BMCVA	SUFF	QUAKER		YES
17	MS S CADBURY	1836-1908	LACFG						QUAKER		
18	W A CADBURY		LACFG								
19	CARNEGIE			BLACPYG		ASH					
20	CARTER			BLACPYG				SUFF			
21	DR CLARKE	1845-1924	LACFG	BLACPYG			BMCVA				
22	DALE				GNS		BMCVA	SUFF	UNITARIAN		YES
23	EVERITT				GNS						
24	HALLOWES		LACFG	BLACPYG	GNS	ASH					
25	HARRISON		LACFG	BLACPYG	GNS						
26	JORDAN		LACFG		GNS	ASH		SUFF			
27	IMPEY	1846-1915					BMCVA	SUFF	QUAKER	LIB	YES
28	MS IMPEY		LACFG								
29	LITTLEBOY	1855-1912		BLACPYG					QUAKER		
30	KING				GNS			SUFF			
31	KNOX			BLACPYG		ASH			C OF E		

Chart Two

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
32	E H LEE		LACFG	BLACPYG				SUFF			
33	T G LEE	D1905	LACFG				BMCVA		UNITARIAN	LIB	
34	MS LLOYD	1837-1925		BLACPYG				SUFF			
35	W E LLOYD		LACFG								
36	MACDONALD			BLACPYG							
37	MS NUNNERLY			BLACPYG							
38	OSLER	1854-1924		BLACPYG		ASH		SUFF	NONCONF	LIB	YES
39	PHILLP			BLACPYG	GNS	ASH		SUFF			
40	PINSENT					ASH		SUFF			
41	A RABONE			BLACPYG				SUFF?			YES
42	H RABONE			BLACPYG				SUFF?			YES
43	M J RABONE	D1920		BLACPYG		ASH		SUFF?			
44	H ROGERS	D1908		BLACPYG	GNS			SUFF	UNIT/C OF E	LIB/ LIB.UN	YES
45	S ROGERS	1832-1884	LACFG					SUFF	CH RED	LIB	YES
46	RUBERY			BLACPYG			BMCVA	SUFF			
47	RYLAND			BLACPYG				SUFF			
48	S WALKER			BLACPYG				SUFF			
49	LADY SMITH		LACFG					SUFF		UNIONIST	
50	SONNENSCHIEN			BLACPYG				SUFF			
51	MS SOUTHALL	1840-1929		BLACPYG			BMCVA	SUFF	QUAKER		YES
52	SOUTHALL	1841-1912		BLACPYG		ASH	BMCVA	SUFF	QUAKER		YES
53	MS STACEY	1836-1909		BLACPYG	GNS		BMCVA		QUAKER/C OF E		YES
54	MS STILLWELL				GNS	ASH		SUFF			
55	STURGE	1832-1919	LACFG		GNS		BMCVA	SUFF	QUAKER		
56	TANGYE	1835-1905		BLACPYG				SUFF	QUAKER		
57	MS TAYLOR			BLACPYG				SUFF			
58	WESTON			BLACPYG				SUFF			
59	VINCE			BLACPYG	GNS			SUFF	METHODIST		
60	MS WILSON	1868-1943		BLACPYG					QUAKER	LIB?	YES
61	WILSON	1826-1914	LACFG			ASH			QUAKER		YES
62	WILKINSON			BLACPYG	GNS						
63	WISEMAN				GNS				WESLEYAN		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	MEMBERSHIP	OF BMCVA							
2									
3	NAME	DATES	POSITION	OTHER ORGANISATIONS			SUFFRAGE	RELIGION	POLITICS
4									
5	MRS ASHFORD		EX CTTEE			GNS/ASH	SUFF	QUAKER	LIB U
6	J BAKER	B1825	EX CTTEE	B OF G	RUBERY HILL	SANITATION		QUAKER	
7	C T BISHOP		EX CTTEE	WATCH CTTEE				BAPTIST	LIB COUNC
8	MRS BISHOP		EX CTTEE	LACFG	BLACPYG	GNS/ASH		BAPTIST	LIB?
9	REV BROWN		EX CTTEE	EDUCATION	MISSION			METHODIST	
10	MRS BROWN		EX CTTEE						
11	MS E CADBURY	1832-1909	EX CTTEE	LACFG	BLACPYG	GNS/ASH		QUAKER	
12	G CADBURY	1839-1922	COUNCIL					QUAKER	LIB
13	R CADBURY	1835-1899	PRESIDENT	LNA				QUAKER	LIB
14	MS CLARKE	1845-1924	EX CTTEE	LACFG	BLACPYG				
15	MRS DALE		COUNCIL			GNS	SUFF	UNITARIAN	
16	MARTINEAU	1831-1909	COUNCIL	EDUCATION					LIB
17	MANTON	B1835	COUNCIL	PAUPER CH				NONCONF	LIB
18	MS STACEY	1836-1909	EX CTTEE		BLACPYG	ASH		QUAKER/C OF E	
19	MRS STURGE	1832-1919	EX CTTEE	LACFG		GNS	SUFF	QUAKER	
20	TYNDALL		COUNCIL	TEMPERANCE	EDUCATION	EAR AND THROAT		UNITARIAN	LIB
21	WILSON		COUNCIL	EDUCATION				QUAKER	LIB UN
22	WHITE	B 1820	COUNCIL	TEMPERANCE	IMPROVEMENT				LIB

Chart Three

These charts were compiled from the information gathered in Appendix 1. See Appendix 1 for further information.

PART THREE: REFORMING PROSTITUTES

Introduction

Two, quite distinct, organisations in Birmingham which dealt with the reformation of prostitutes will be examined in this section.[1] The first reform institution, the Magdalen Asylum was run by the Church of England whereas the second, Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home, was run by the Ladies' Association for the Care of Friendless Girls. (LACFG) This section will analyse these organisations using the categories of gender, class and religion. Firstly, it will be argued that gender is of no greater significance than class or religion in understanding reform institutions. Secondly, it will be maintained that neither gender, class nor religion are homogeneous categories but must be understood relationally. Gender was modified by class and religion but equally class and religion were gendered. Thirdly it will be claimed that this process of modification created tensions as much as harmony so that contradictions emerged between gender, class and religion which were not easily resolved. Fourthly, it will be proposed that the categories outlined above only present part of the picture of reform. Paid staff affected the daily lives of the inmates, reinforcing or undermining the values of the institution. Finally, it will be suggested that, despite the aspirations of the organisers, Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home was little different from the Magdalen Asylum thus undermining the ideal of female unity.

Gender might initially appear to be the most important category with which to understand the process of moral reform in Birmingham. Reform was distinctly gendered. Both the managers of the Magdalen Asylum and the LACFG hoped to socialise women into behaving in a modest, feminine manner and wanted to train them for female jobs. The composition of each institution also differed by gender. Whereas the Asylum was run by a mixed group of men and women, Mrs Rogers' Home was run entirely by women. Perhaps as a consequence of this, the treatment meted out to the inmates varied. Whereas the Magdalen Asylum preferred a punitive approach to the reformation of prostitutes, Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home adopted a friendlier, more congenial system. It might be assumed that this was a result of the different gender composition of the institutions. However, as indicated in Part Two, the people who founded and organised these institutions came from different backgrounds and held a range of political opinions and religious beliefs which helped create their own discrete institutions.

Gender was therefore only one of a number of categories which require critical analysis: class was also significant. Even though the Birmingham middle class was heterogeneous, both the Magdalen Asylum and the LACFG held a common set of assumptions about the working class. More importantly, those in charge of the two institutions retained the power. Class was manifested in the unequal relationship which existed between the middle class volunteers and the working class staff and inmates. Rescue and

reform was entirely about working class women being saved by their middle class 'superiors'. It was generally working class women who were sought out, stigmatised and ultimately 'saved' by women and men who had the time, money and social connections to achieve this.[2] Once admitted to the Asylum or Home, the penitent prostitute was subjected to a similar pattern of authority[3] as those incarcerated in institutions elsewhere[4] and trained to become the apotheosis of the working class female: the docile domestic servant.

Moreover, class issues were not just mediated by gender but by political and religious beliefs which defined and shaped attitudes towards prostitutes and prostitution. Indeed, there were significant denominational and political differences between the Asylum and the Home which in turn led to different perceptions of the prostitute. Whereas prostitutes were perceived as sinners by the managers of the Asylum, it will be shown that they were viewed as victims by the managers of the Home. Of course, this may have been due neither to religious beliefs nor to the fact that women with feminist sympathies tended to view prostitutes more sympathetically.

These two institutions, however, were based in Birmingham. Research to date on reform work is very localised.[5] What might be true of Birmingham may well not apply to other localities or indeed vice versa but an analysis of national similarities and differences is outside the scope of this study. Nevertheless, the striking resemblance between Birmingham institutions and those of

Scotland, Ireland, Windsor and York suggest an 'archipelago' of reform within Britain.[6]

Similarities between the Asylum and the Home, certainly, appeared to outweigh the differences. Both institutions, for example, shared an hegemonic aim of reforming prostitutes through incarceration. Although the means to that end differed it was only a difference in form rather than structure - the 19th century equivalent of the difference between Holloway and an Open Prison. Consequently, one is led to believe perhaps that male headed Anglican institutions differed only marginally from those run by Nonconformist women. However, these variations may have made a world of difference to the inmates incarcerated within these two institutions.

Institutions, however, cannot usefully be discussed as organic entities since they are administered by personnel who may conform to or subvert the aims, principles and procedures of the institution. In this respect, neither the categories of gender, class nor religion prove adequate tools of analysis. Individuals were seen to make a difference in the way the institution was managed. There are indications within the Annual Reports and the press that the paid staff played a critical role in the administration and atmosphere of each institution. The paid staff within these institutions affected the way in which each was administered so that as personnel changed so too did the way in which each organisation was managed. An establishment

suitably endowed with responsible, well trained and humane staff differed markedly from those without such assets. This interpretation makes the conduct of the individual employees in these institutions more critical and significant than previous research, which has tended to reify organisations, would admit.[7] It is difficult to examine this further - both because of the paucity of sources and the fact that the reports are refracted through the perceptions of the employing rather than the employee class - but these obstacles illuminate the problem of relying upon published aims and objectives in the analysis of organisations.

In the following chapters, therefore, the attitudes, values and assumptions of the organisers will be examined, the ways in which inmates were treated will be analysed and the contributions of the paid workers will be assessed and placed within a gender, class and religious framework. Attempts will also be made to judge whether women only organisations made that much of a difference to the policies adopted.

Notes and references

(1) Reform groups proliferated in 19th century Birmingham but few records remain of their work. For example both the Salvation Army and the Church Army were involved in the rescue and reform of prostitutes. The Church Army for instance did not build their own reform institution in Birmingham. Instead, two Church Army missionaries worked in Birmingham between 1911-1916 with Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home. (Rescue Stations of the Church Army, 1911-1916.) In 1912, one worker, Sister Reeves, received £23 per annum plus board, lodging and washing. Field workers were trained for ten weeks in London. (The Church Army at Home and Abroad, 1887-1888.) In contrast to the predominantly middle class

composition of the Magdalen Asylum and Mrs Rogers' Home, these groups consisted largely of working class women. As such they might have provided an interesting contrast to the Magdalen Asylum and Mrs Roger's Home but sources do not permit further exploration.

(2) L Mahood, The Magdalenes, Routledge, 1990, p155.

(3) Authority structures, of course, were also gendered. Women tend to run organisations differently from men. This provides an interesting illustration of the tensions between gender and class.

(4) See L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990; V Bonham, A Place in Life, privately published, 1992 for an illustration of authority structures.

(5) See Chapter One for a discussion of the reform institutions in Britain.

(6) See Chapter One for a fuller discussion of reform institutions.

(7) L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990 and V Bonham, A Place in Life, 1993 both tend to reify the institutions they discuss.

Chapter Three: The Magdalen Asylum

The Magdalen Asylum was founded sometime in the first two decades of the nineteenth century.[1] It was established in Broad Street, on Glebe Land belonging to the Rector of St Martins, by Archdeacon Hodson, Vicar of Christ Church.[2] On June 25th 1860 the Asylum moved to Clarendon Road, Edgbaston,[3] Birmingham where it remained until 1920 when it was taken over by the Association for the Care and Training of Unmarried Mothers and their babies to become Hope Lodge.[4] The Magdalen Asylum in Birmingham, it will be shown, was little different from those found elsewhere in Britain.[5]

The attitudes towards prostitutes and prostitution held by the Asylum Committee[6] were not only informed by gender but also by class and religious assumptions. Nevertheless, the category of gender was important in a number of ways. Firstly, prostitution was seen as a full-time[7] female profession: male prostitution was never discussed or considered.[8] Secondly, prostitution was considered a female problem. Like the Magdalen homes in Scotland, prostitutes, not the men who used them, were the objects of moral scrutiny.[9] Illicit sex, one can assume, was considered to be a natural biological urge for men but not for women. Thirdly, prostitution challenged the notion of the sexually passive woman: women were expected to be either virgins or wives who succumbed, a little unwillingly, to male advances. Prostitutes - as sexualised women - undermined the principle of female propriety and weakened the concept of the double standard by offering a

problematic role model for women. Fourthly, prostitutes were perceived as sexual contaminators who posed a threat to the institution of marriage, the sanctity of the family and ultimately the sexual and moral order of the time.[10] It was feared that female prostitution affected and contaminated the whole of society, ruined health, destroyed spiritual life, undermined mental power and ate, like a cancer, at the heart of English life.[11] Prostitution was seen to tarnish the minds of the innocent as "it flaunts about the streets, it meets our sons and our daughters, and it taints the atmosphere in which it moves".[12] Finally, prostitutes were never seen as an homogeneous group. They were, in effect, categorised into those worth saving and those who were not - often the women's age was the determining factor in this. A sliding scale of morality operated. At one end of the sexually dissolute spectrum stood the older, irredeemable prostitute whereas at the other stood a much younger, impressionable and compliant woman who could be saved.

The gendered ideas about prostitutes outlined above dominated the early thinking of the Magdalen Asylum but appeared to have softened by the 1880's to be replaced by one based on class.[13] Attention shifted to a focus on poverty and working class women. Superficially the emphasis placed upon class contradicted the Committee's gendered analysis but on closer inspection it tended to complement it. Poverty was held responsible for prostitution: wealthy people who paid women workers low wages were blamed.[14] Such exploitation, it was believed, prohibited women from

becoming economically independent so forcing them to earn their living on the streets. This new analysis marked a gradual shift away from blaming individual women for prostitution to blaming society. However, the Asylum Committee did not view poverty as a structural problem but one whereby wealthy individuals paid low wages to female individuals.[15] Furthermore, no solutions were offered to end such exploitation so the social order remained unchallenged. The belief that working class women were to be pitied rather than judged, was weakened by the Asylum Committee's beliefs about the working class. Poverty was associated, in their mind, with immorality. Prostitution resulted from the endemic indecency which existed amongst the working class.[16] Large families lived, ate, drank, and slept together in one room which, it was argued, made the cultivation of chastity impracticable. Young girls brought up in indecent homes of a demoralising and degrading nature, it was thought, became rude and uncultivated.[17] Born into the lowest strata of society, without decent family values, young women were without training in good habits and the virtues associated with gentility.[18] This lack of moral fibre, it was alleged, resulted in their subsequent downfall and entry into a world of vice.

Evangelical religious conviction, just as much as class and gender assumptions, informed the Magdalen Asylum Committee's attitude towards the prostitute. As prostitution was held to be a grievous sin, prostitutes were therefore sinners who would be excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven and condemned to ever-lasting fire.[19] Parallels were drawn between prostitution in Birmingham

and Sodom and Gomorrah but with a new twist - prostitutes in Birmingham were to be saved by the Magdalen Committee. Both the language and the sentiments expressed in the Annual Reports, in keeping with Evangelical belief, convey images of sin, damnation and a punitive God:

> ...it is a grievous sin. It is a sin which "proceeds out of the heart, and defiles a man." It is a sin for which signal punishment was, with the marked approval of God, summarily inflicted under the Law. It is a sin which, in part, drew down "upon Sodom and Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven". It is a sin which leadeth unto "death." It is a sin which "God will" especially "judge." It is a sin which will cause its impenitent perpetrators to be excluded from the "Kingdom of God." It is a sin for the sake of which "the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." It is sin for which believers are commanded to separate from licentious professors of religion, so that they may be ashamed, and brought to penitence...It is a sin which only those who are without right "understanding" indulge in. It is a sin from which persons are exhorted to "flee" as from a pestilence.[20]

The rhetorical style of the Annual Reports testifies to the obsession that the organisers of the Asylum had with the redemption of souls. The language used in the Annual Reports was resonant with religious fervour and the redemptive power of God:

> Forty-five never dying souls brought away from paths leading rapidly downward to everlasting misery, sheltered from the temptations by which they were beset and bound as if by snares and chains, taught how to enter the straight gate and walk the narrow way leading to eternal life; and if prayers, joined to instruction by the Grace of God avail, brought from death of sin to a new birth until righteousness.[21]

Even the name - Magdalen Asylum - evoked images of penitence - women entered an institution blessed with the name of that most

famous of female sinners. And like Mary Magdalen, inmates were encouraged to repent their past life, ask forgiveness for their sins and make a fresh start so that they could be assured entry to future Paradise. Once again, largely because Evangelicalism was essentially an individualistic creed, individual solutions were preferred to structural ones:

> The Home...being engaged in the rescue of those who have fallen to the depths of social degradation, and who, but for its timely aid, must remain in a hopeless condition of sin and misery...it offers a shelter from a life of sin, and an opportunity for a fresh start in the paths of virtue.[22]

As indicated above, attitudes were not always coherent - at one and the same time women were viewed as poverty stricken victims and as sinners and sexual contaminators. Nevertheless there was little ambiguity and no change over time in the Asylum Committee's attitude towards the individual prostitute - she was a sinner; and towards prostitution - it was an evil.[23] Consequently, the Magdalen Asylum curtailed the activities of those who threatened the nation: the female prostitute who was defined as the human embodiment of depravity and vice. If the individual prostitute was reformed, prostitution would be eliminated, sons saved from moral danger and the social order would remain intact.

The gendered, class and religious attitudes and values outlined above informed the selection procedures and admission policies of the Magdalen Asylum. They were also informed by age. Only a small number of penitents were accepted[24] and numbers fluctuated

between 17 and 43 according to census returns[25] and Annual Reports.[26] The Magdalen Asylum, like other institutions for the reform of prostitutes, categorised women into worthy and unworthy cases. Members of the Committee, like the Committees in Scotland, Ireland and York had little interest in the professional or 'hardened' prostitute and only accepted younger women who were relatively new to the profession.[27] The majority of inmates were under 20.[28] In 1885 16 were under 18, 16 between 18-20, 14 between 20-25 and 5 over 25.[29]

Women who entered the Magdalen Asylum tended to be unskilled and working class: in 1869, out of 24 inmates, 6 had worked in factories, whereas, 14, the majority, had been former domestic servants. They were single and without both parents: in 1869, for instance, only five out of twenty four women had both parents living.[30] Homeless, without family or funds to support them the main alternative to the refuge was the workhouse. Selecting such young women, who were perhaps impressionable and vulnerable, may have enabled the staff and the philanthropists of the Asylum to treat the inmate as a child rather than an adult.[31]

Furthermore, only penitent prostitutes were admitted. The Asylum, it was believed, should exist purely for those who were escaping from degradation, misery and sin. Only those who were deemed worthy and capable of reform were to be admitted "..its object being to reclaim from a life of sin those unfortunate females who profess themselves desirous to return to the paths of virtue and happiness."[32]

Consequently, as with other reform institutions,[33] only healthy women were admitted: those who were "pregnant, diseased[34] or deranged"[35] were not accepted. Indeed great concern was expressed that some women who were recommended by subscribers were too sick, too old, too pinched by poverty, or too criminally inclined to enter.[36] It was constantly stressed in the Annual Reports that the Asylum should not be a substitute for the workhouse or hospital:[37]

> Its object and design are entirely different from those of such places; having respect chiefly to the formation of principles and habits that will qualify their subject to live a reputable and useful life.[38]

Potential inmates therefore had to submit to a physical examination by a male surgeon[39] or physician to ensure that they were physically fit to enter.[40] Those who did not meet the rigid health criteria of the Asylum were referred to the workhouse.[41]

In theory the Asylum was seen as a Home, rather than a penitentiary and was symbolised by a "mixture of love and wisdom, gentleness and firmness, sympathy and discretion"[42] Kindness and generosity were viewed as essential components with which to remould inmates and enable them to make a positive contribution to the community in which they lived:

> a great change has to be wrought in their temper and habits before they are fit for any honest calling in life. The external appearance of these hard natures are lost to all the nobler instincts of humanity: yet they are not so lost but that they may be softened and remolded by kindly and judicious treatment, and by the ministrations of the Gospel of grace ... What such persons need, first

> of all, is a sympathising and helping hand. many of them are weary and heart-sick of their mode of life, and would willingly come back to the paths of virtue, but society closes every door against their return. Homeless and friendless, as many are; without character, and, therefore, without the means of obtaining a situation, and so earning an honest livelihood, they feel that their position is hopeless, and that they are outside the pale of society.[43]

In practice, however, the Asylum remained a punitive institution, rather than a kind one, similar to other institutions analysed in Chapter One.

Whatever their geographical location or religious foundation, reform institutions tried to remould women into a more pleasing feminised working class model.[44] The treatment meted out to those admitted was generally informed by these gender, class and religious perspectives. On admittance, inmates were placed in a temporary ward until the Committee had investigated their past.[45] Parents, friends and employers were contacted to discover the truth of each story. Nothing was left to trust: working class young women were not considered to be reliable witnesses to their own past. Only when the prospective inmate's history had been verified by others was it assumed to be true.[46] Women were not considered to be fully admitted until the results of the Asylum's enquiries were known.[47] When these enquiries had proved satisfactory, inmates were placed into a separate Probationary Ward for six weeks of training.

The Asylum set out to discipline those who broke the gendered, class and religious conventions of the organisers. Every

opportunity was taken to encourage inmates to conform to middle class female behavioural expectations. Once accepted into the Magdalen Asylum inmates were incarcerated for two years.[48] Women were induced to stay for two years for a number of reasons. It has been suggested that incarceration was the first stage in the process of domestication.[49] Inmates were stripped of their identity and given new clothes to wear[50] in an attempt to remold them into prospective domestic servants. Apparently, two years gave sufficient time for the inmate to learn how the middle class expected working class women to think and behave. The Magdalen Asylum Committee believed that it took a long time for women to reestablish a moral character and to be truly reformed:

> Experience teaches that while in occasional instances they may be satisfactorily sent out to service after a shorter stay, yet, that in the great majority of cases, there is so much both to unlearn and to learn, as regards habits of life and suitableness for good service, that the chief benefit is generally realised in the second year.[51]

A long stay in the Asylum removed inmates from the influence of friends and family. It was a self-contained social world where the only contact with the outside was through the Committee and staff. It was believed that if inmates were not distracted by corrupt (i.e. working class) outside influences they might more easily internalise the cultural values of the Asylum.[52] Moreover, the Asylum protected society from the malevolent influence of the fallen woman. Prostitutes, as contaminated women, needed to be kept separate from the clean and morally healthy.[53] On the other hand, men who used the prostitutes did not have their freedom curtailed. Only criminals and diseased

prostitutes were treated in such a peremptory fashion. Asylum managers thought it reasonable to intern women who had not been committed of a crime: it is doubtful if men would have been treated in this way. Such treatment reinforced the ideology of the sexual double standard by punishing women rather than the men who used them.

Although the Asylum did not see itself as a reformatory or a penitentiary, its rules and regulations were fairly similar.[54] It was a punitive regime based on the retribution of sins. As young, female, penitent sinners, inmates were assumed incapable of exercising moral judgment. The women were reduced to the status of dependents - the status of children - when they entered the Asylum. The young age of the inmates and the older age of the Committee[55] undoubtedly helped establish a parental relationship based on authority and submission. On entry to the Asylum freedom was completely curtailed. Inmates were denied access to the ordinary daily pattern of life: they could not shop, visit friends or go for a leisurely walk unaccompanied. They were not allowed to leave the premises except on urgent business and then only with permission.[56] In 1863 these rules were extended. If women were granted permission to venture outside the home they had to be chaperoned:

> No female, after she is received, shall be allowed to go out of the premises until discharged, except on very urgent and extraordinary occasions, and then not without leave of the Matron: and in each case she shall be accompanied by a trusty female, and shall return before sunset: and such permission shall always be entered in the Matron's journal.[57]

For two years, except when sleeping, the women - like children - were rarely alone. Like the inmates of prisons or convents they lived, worked and prayed alongside others: it was an enforced communal existence.[58] Life in the Asylum was well ordered probably because of a belief that inmates would adopt the cultural values of the institution if they lived and worked in a structured environment. This ordered existence provided a direct contrast to their supposedly previous chaotic lives. Decisions were made for inmates not by them. From the time they got up in the morning to the time they went to bed their lives were regulated like those of children.

If any woman behaved badly or broke the rules she was admonished and publicly expelled before the rest of the inmates. This undoubtedly reinforced discipline, ensured obedience and was as much for the benefit of those who remained as of those expelled. It also encouraged submissive behaviour - an essential attribute for working class women.

> When any female shall be expelled for ill conduct, one of the Chaplains shall read over the minute of the Committee requiring such expulsion before all the inmates, adding such admonition as he may think proper.[59]

Work reinforced gender and class conformity. The Magdalen asylum replicated the work pattern of the 'real' world. In order to form virtuous and industrious habits which would qualify them for paid work women were expected to work hard within the institution.[60]

> The work attempted at the institution is of a two-fold character: to ameliorate the moral and spiritual condition of those who enter, and at the same time to train them to habits of industry and order, and so fit them to become useful members of Society.[61]

Apart from a brief unsuccessful attempt to introduce box making in 1903,[62] all of the inmates were expected to work in the laundry. Laundry work was the leitmotif of these types of institutions.[63] This work was favoured for a number of reasons. Firstly it reinforced gender roles. Inmates, like the rest of asylum and penitentiary women in the British Isles, learnt their lost feminine skills through laundry work.[64] In almost every case young women who entered the Asylum could be put to work in the laundry as it required little or no training.[65] It reeducated them into correct female attitudes and modes of behaviour and to a feminine role that was their expected future.

Laundry work, and its associated occupation, domestic service, - more so than other working class women's work such as factory work - also encouraged dependency rather than independence. Women were reduced to the status of dependents in the Asylum and remained so when employed as a domestic servant.[66] Domestic servants lived in the rather enclosed world of a home and were under constant supervision by their employers both in their work and free time. Furthermore, domestic servants also lived in close proximity to their middle class employers so the Asylum Committee may have assumed that ex-inmates might have the correct moral values, learnt in the Asylum, reinforced by their social superiors. Employment in a middle class home, allegedly, gave

Magdalen women a foothold on the ladder of respectability.[67]

Laundry work in the Magdalen prepared inmates for similar work outside. Gender, in this respect, blended well with class expectations. Laundry work trained inmates for domestic service which was viewed as the only fitting occupation for working class women.[68] No opportunity was ever given for young women to transcend either their class background or their gender role. Increased job opportunities, particularly in the latter part of the century, opened up employment prospects for women but training was never offered by the Committee in other occupations.[69] The Magdalen Asylum was far more interested in reform rather than in change and prevention.[70] But it must be remembered that most of the women in the Magdalen Asylum had at some stage been domestic servants and for many it was the only type of work they had known. It was also the only job they expected in future for it was unlikely that other job opportunities would be available for the reformed penitent.[71]

Rafter,[72] Mahood,[73] and Prochaska[74] all argue that laundry work prepared inmates as domestic servants to the growing middle class. This may have been the case in New York, Scotland and some areas of Britain but it did not apply quite so much in Birmingham. The numbers who left the Asylum each year to enter domestic service hardly made a difference to the insatiable middle class demand for servants. For example in 1880, eleven inmates left for domestic service to add to an approximate number

of 13,827 women employed as domestic servants in Birmingham.[75] The number of Asylum women who entered service was therefore hardly a drop in the domestic ocean.[76] In addition, ex-asylum inmates were not always considered suitable servants for established middle class families. Families may well have preferred to employ young women from rural backgrounds rather than someone who was once thought of as a 'social evil', especially to look after children:

> They must see to it that the nurse to whom the entrust their children is not only of sound moral character, but also of a pure and healthy mind...She was astonished to find how often children were committed to the care of girls who were most unfit to have charge of them. For this reason she could not favour the employment of nursery-maids of girls from penitentiaries.[77]

Indeed the low wages received by ex-inmates[78] suggests that they were often engaged by families lower down the social scale who did not need a decorative servant but one who could possibly accomplish heavy work.

Religious ideas were also important. Cleanliness was the grand metaphor of religious purity - after all cleanliness was supposedly next to godliness.[79] In eliminating physical dirt, order was also established in the spiritual world of the inmates. It was also the metaphor of absolution. In scrubbing sheets white as the purist snow, inmates washed away their sins and regained their shining soul. In addition, laundry work may have been favoured because hard physical labour acted as a penance.[80] In working hard, in primitive conditions, inmates atoned for their sins. Laundry work in the Asylum was harsh. Malcolmson

notes that laundry work took place in poor sanitary conditions.[81] Workers suffered from rheumatism, ulcerated legs, bronchitis and other allied complaints as a result of standing for long hours in ill-ventilated damp rooms.[82] It is hard to believe that Magdalen Asylum inmates were healthier than the rest of the laundry population.[83] In fact, Annual Reports demonstrate that laundry output declined at times due to ill-health. Until 1877 when hot and cold water was supplied, women either pumped cold water by hand from a spring or else used rain water.[84] Wet washing was either dried in open drying grounds or in hot air closets. It was certainly a punishing schedule for even strong healthy young women.[85]

The following extract depicts the various reasons why the Asylum Committee favoured laundry work. It suggests the importance of absolution and submission, the virtue of industry above indolence and the necessity of remolding inmates into this particular gendered framework:

> Its aim is not merely to wash off the taint of the past, but to infuse into her new ideas of life, and of the way in which a happier life may be attained: to inspire willingness to work into the indolent, self-control into the emotional, self-respect into the passionate: to eradicate the deeply rooted evil habits of the past and to infuse a spirit of order, virtue, propriety and submission: and above all things to bring her to the knowledge of God.[86]

One may conclude from this that the laundry acted more as a mechanism for penitence than it did as a profit making enterprise. Like most charitable institutions, fiscal needs

dominated.[87] Inmates were expected to pay for their keep.[88] The laundry made the home financially viable and cut the cost of the inmates' confinement.[89] Institutions, like the Asylum were said to depend on the work of the inmates for its material reproduction.[90] This was not wholly true of the Asylum in practice as charity supplemented its income. The financial position of the laundry remained precarious between 1885-1914. Receipts from laundry work were at first fairly steady, earning over £1,000 between 1874-1884 but in 1885 they dropped to £805.[91] Throughout its time at Clarendon Road the Asylum was plagued by financial difficulties - the earnings from the laundry were never able to cover the cost of running the Asylum. In practice the organisers relied on subscription lists, donations, congregational collections and legacies to support the Asylum.[92] Nonetheless, it must be conceded that the Magdalen Asylum earned more from its inmates than its subscribers.

Leisure activities were also organised to reinforce the gendered, class and religious values of the institution. Guided leisure, it was believed, eliminated the vices of ignorance, restiveness, and uncontrolled, unrestrained behaviour which had been fostered by an alleged life of self-indulgence:

> A spirit of lawlessness and impatience of restraint fostered by a life of self-indulgence is ever ready to manifest itself. While even in those who do sincerely desire and strive after what is right, there are frequent failures because the power for good has been so weakened by evil habits that they are unable to carry out the good purposes they may have formed. Hence, it is not so much instruction that is needed as training. And to this end a constant, careful supervision is exercised even during the periods of recreation so as to check the first indication

> of wrong and prevent the bad influence of one from injuring others.[93]

Recreation was not leisure - it was work. Leisure was a means whereby the cultural and moral gendered mores of the middle class were inculcated. It was also preparation for domestic service:

> there ought to be more time for instruction spiritual and other ... It is their (the staff) aim to train these girls to lead a wholesome life by giving them healthy forms of recreation as well as arduous work. Many of the girls are very young, 14-16, and they at least need training, not only by Laundry work, but by physical exercises, singing, reading and writing and simple lectures on economic subjects in preparation for their future life of domestic service.[94]

Emphasis was placed on doing good works. This provides yet another example of the ways in which the class and religious assumptions of the managers of the Asylum attempted to modify the behaviour of the female inmates. Typical pursuits involved either reading or listening to works from the Church Missionary Society both of which reinforced humility, obedience and servility - deemed to be proper gender, class and religious virtues.[95] In the rest of their spare time the women were engaged in 'voluntary' work. Inmates were 'invited' to make garments for the Church Missionary Society as gifts.[96] While sewing their thoughts were generally drawn, by reading and conversation, to the good done by other benevolent societies. It is hard to judge how voluntary this Missionary Work actually was:

> And when the sale of needlework for the furtherance of the Medical Mission took place this year, the voluntary labour in leisure-time of Inmates of the Magdalen supplied garments as offerings of sympathy.[97]

Religion also filled the 'recreational' hours and played both a formal and informal role within the Asylum. The whole way of life in the Asylum was arranged so that the inmates, like those incarcerated in the Clewer House of Mercy, would be morally and spiritually uplifted.[98] Religious observance was an important part of each inmate's life. The paid chaplain conducted a service every Sunday evening in the committee room of the Asylum so that the "objectionable alternative has been avoided of taking the inmates through the public thoroughfare to a place of worship"[99] Morning and evening prayers were conducted daily in the Chapel by the matrons whilst the Clergy attended two evenings a week.[100] There were also regular Bible classes taken by the 'ladies' who instructed the inmates in religion.[101]

> Many a one has been strengthened and cheered amid difficulties and temptations by the consciousness of possessing the loving interest and sympathy which these kind friends have manifested towards them.[102]

Even within religious practice, however, a religious hierarchy was established based on notions of respectability. Not every inmate was considered responsible enough to attend church or be confirmed. Until 1887 only a select few were allowed to attend church on Sunday morning and even then inmates were "never pressed to take the sacrament".[103] Women were carefully selected for confirmation in the church. Only those who recognised the religious importance of worship, whose demeanour was 'holy' (which probably meant obedient and demure), who understood the church services and who had fully assimilated the cultural,

religious and gendered mores were accepted as communicants:

> if at the same time the Matron and the Chaplain both think her life and conversation such as becomes holiness, if, moreover, they are satisfied that she has a right understanding of the benefits to be sought in communicating, and of what is required of those who come to the Lord's Supper, then the young woman is allowed to become a communicant.[104]

In the early part of the twentieth century, other recreational facilities were offered to the inmates but these remained a rare occurrence and were similarly designed to inculcate appropriate values.[105] Inmates were occasionally invited to residences in the vicinity of the Asylum, where they were entertained by the mistress of the house. Money was donated for treats for the women, some donors provided a country drive and afternoon tea.[106] This form of leisure may well have been inspired by Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home whose Committee offered a variety of activities for its inmates.

Not all the inmates welcomed the opportunity to embody virtuous, working class and feminine values or accepted the category of gender imposed upon them. Women in other institutions rebelled against the class and gender role allotted to them.[107] So too did the inmates of the Magdalen Asylum. Despite the difficulties of rebelling, a few rejected the imposition of a middle class moral ethos. There were numerous occasions when the inmates left the institution: some absconded,[108] some left of their own accord, some only stayed for a short time. There were also indications within the press and Annual Reports that there was sporadic unrest within the Magdalen Asylum. It was often reported

that the home was much more settled;[109] that the conduct of the inmates was generally better, and that harmonious conditions prevailed;[110] that the inmates fell in with the rules and arrangements of the home and that there were comparatively few instances of necessary discipline;[111] that they did not have to expel that year for misconduct;[112] that there had been no serious disturbance or case of gross insubordination;[113] nor conduct demanding severe punishment.[114] It can be assumed from reports such as these that life was far from settled, harmonious and peaceful within the institution.

Other, less obvious, forms of rebellion also occurred. Laundry work was often beset with problems. Complaints about the standard of work were common place: customers were advised not to delay the Porter who delivered the laundry by complaining to him.[115] It was believed that the standard was low because the laundry was done by the unskilled, untrained and often unsupervised hands of an unpaid inmate.[116] Another reason could be that laundry work permitted the inmates some small degree of resistance. Going slow, washing half-heartedly or ironing inadequately were perhaps some of the few ways young women could register their discontent.

As demonstrated above, there were striking similarities between the Magdalen Asylum and institutions found elsewhere. However, it is important not to reify institutions. Inmates' responses, to Magdalen life may have more to do with the staff employed by the Asylum Committee. Although the Magdalen Asylum was financed and

administered by the aristocracy, male clerics, vicars' wives and middle class philanthropists, paid, generally working class, women were in control of the daily supervision and moral welfare of the predominantly working class inmates. The committee appointed and dismissed all the paid staff but the day to day routine was not in their hands but in those of the paid employees.[117] The daily pattern of the Magdalen Asylum was that of an all female institution. Women organised, controlled and supervised other women on a daily basis. Inmates may have been more likely to be influenced by a matron or a supervisor than one of the distant members of the Committee.

Inmates were supervised and cared for by female employees who may well have had greater class, and perhaps age, affinity with the inmates than with their employers. In 1871 there were four staff, all in their thirties; in 1881 there were five staff which included a Lady Superintendent aged 61, a head matron aged 69, a secretary, housekeeper and laundress; in 1891 there were five staff which included a Lady Superintendent, a needlework matron, two laundry maids and a kitchen helper, all in their 30's or early 40's and one general servant aged 16.[118] Elderly staff were thus an exception as most employees tended to be single women in their late 30's and early 40's.

A shared gender identity and class background between the inmates and staff might indicate a potential solidarity and the sharing of common values. This was not so. There was little gender or

class unity between the Asylum employees and the inmates, as was witnessed by the many attempts at rebellion. Nevertheless, inmates rebelled more at certain times than others which suggests that individuals made a marked difference to the running of the Asylum.[119] The numbers of absconding women fluctuated according to the Matron in charge which suggests that paid staff played a crucial role in the success of the institution. In 1873, when Miss Fletcher was appointed, only six inmates left of their own accord.[120] Apparently her "Christian sympathy and tact"[121] won the confidence and affection of the inmates. In contrast thirty-eight left in 1870 and twenty three in 1871 when another Matron was in charge.[122]

Consequently, although the Asylum Committee wrote the rules and regulations they depended on paid staff to implement their policies. Where these staff were effective, the institution ran smoothly but when they were not the aims of the institution were subverted and problems occurred. Nevertheless, the Matron and other staff were on the payroll of the Committee who created the philosophy of the institution - it can be assumed that the staff were only free to bend the rules not to change them.

When inmates proved themselves to be morally and spiritually fit they were either restored to their family or friends, or placed in a situation.[123] On leaving the institution young women were given an outfit which they had to pay for at a later date, possibly to encourage traditional middle class attitudes of thrift. In 1907 these outfits were given free of charge.[124]

> On quitting the Home they are provided with an outfit and a respectable situation. Each year from seventeen to twenty-five are thus sent out prepared for a better life, by far the greater number of whom are known to continue in well-doing.[125]

On the one hand, as the above extract suggests, the Asylum seemingly had great success in changing the inmate into respectable, hard-working and morally upright citizens. Apparently the Asylum had a good reputation amongst local employers. Annual Reports and newspaper accounts stressed that former inmates who had been placed in service proved reliable and hard-working, making a waiting list necessary.[126] However, such comments originate from official sources - it was difficult to find other evidence to either refute or support these claims of success. Another factor for the popularity of employing ex-inmates may well have been the low wages that ex-asylum women received.[127] Furthermore, it was difficult for the Asylum to keep track of all the ex-inmates and some may well have reverted to their former lives after a few years.

However, much of this perceived success could have been due to the supervision exercised by the Asylum. Those who entered domestic service were carefully monitored by their new employers to ensure they worked hard and remained chaste. Housekeepers gave the Asylum accounts of the ex-inmates conduct and informed them when they left. Occasionally the Lady Superintendent visited the young women in their situations.[128]

On the other hand, after two years of incarceration and

subservient domestics of all its inmates. There were many instances of women absconding from their position or else proving unsatisfactory in their new situation.[129] In 1888 two absconded under very discreditable circumstances, one left after three days whilst the other had robbed her mistress before leaving.[130]

From the evidence outlined above it can be concluded that gender was an inadequate category with which to understand the process of moral reform in the Asylum. The class and religious specificity of gender meant that inmates were reconstructed in a very particular way. It also suggests that the Birmingham Asylum provided a similar reformatory experience to that of York, Windsor, Scotland and Ireland charted in Chapter One which indicates perhaps the emergence of a British pattern in the reformation of prostitutes. The development of such an analysis, however, is outside the scope of this thesis. Instead the next section will examine a different institution, namely Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home, to ascertain whether or not the nature of reform was different when Nonconformist women took charge.

Notes and references

(1) The MA Annual Report of 1861 places the date as 1822 whereas the MA Annual Report of 1891 refers to its foundation as 1819. The Edgbastonia Directory places the date as 1828. There is no way of reconciling these differences.

(2) MA Annual Report, 1861.

(3) Walkowitz notes that London rescue homes were either located in middle class areas or else in the suburbs. This made for a complete break with the inmate's past. (J Walkowitz, "We are not Beasts of the Field": Prostitution and the Campaign Against the

Contagious Diseases Acts, Ph.D., University of Rochester, 1974, pp36-37.) One can assume that this was also the case in Birmingham - Edgbaston was a middle class district.

(4) Hope Lodge was managed by the Association for the Care and Training of Unmarried Mothers and their Babies. This organisation was permitted to take over the Magdalen Asylum on the proviso that they maintained reform work and that Church of England clergy be appointed as Chaplains. Kunzel has suggested that most rescue homes in the U.S.A. shifted to care for unmarried mothers. (R Kunzel, Fallen Women, Problem Girls, Yale University Press, 1993, pp17-19.) This may have been the case in England but there has been no empirical research to date to confirm this.

(5) See Chapter One for a discussion of reform institutions in Britain.

(6) These Committees were elected by Members at a General Meeting. Members were those who subscribed more than one guinea per annum. Those who lived more than five miles away, and Ladies, could vote by proxy. All the offices were gratuitous apart from Chaplain, Matron, Sub-Matron and Laundress. (MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.)

(7) J Walkowitz, Prostitution in Victorian Society, 1980, has demonstrated that prostitution was a part time activity. This was never recognised by the Magdalen Committees.

(8) MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.

(9) B Littlewood and L Mahood, "Prostitutes, Magdalenes and Wayward Girls: Dangerous Sexualities of Working Class Women in Victorian Scotland", Gender and History, Summer, 1991, p163.

(10) MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.

(11) Daily Gazette, March 13th 1877; MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.

(12) MA Annual Report, 1861, p7.

(13) MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.

(14) MA Annual Reports, 1880-1914.

(15) MA Annual Reports, 1880-1914.

(16) MA Annual Reports, 1880-1914.

(17) The fear of working class immorality was common amongst middle class philanthropists. Working class parents no longer, allegedly, brought up their children to believe in proper values and behave in modest ways. See R Johnson, "Educational Policy and Social Control in Early Victorian England", Past and Present, Number 49, 1970, pp101-110, for a discussion of this and middle

Number 49, 1970, pp101-110, for a discussion of this and middle class concern about working class decadence.

(18) MA Annual Report, 1903, p4.

(19) It has been suggested that, by the 1880s, Anglicans favoured a less punitive God. (G Parsons, Religion in Victorian Britain, 1988, p9.) This did not seem to apply in Birmingham.

(20) MA Annual Report, 1861, pp7-8.

(21) MA Annual Report, 1877, p3.

(22) Edgbastonia, June 1890.

(23) MA Annual Report, 1904, pp8-9.

(24) Edgbastonia, June 1890.

(25) Census returns, 1871; 1881; 1891.

(26) See Chart 4 at the end of the footnotes for the numbers involved.

(27) See Chapter One for a discussion of institutions other than Birmingham.

(28) Census returns, 1871; 1881; 1891.

(29) MA Annual Report, 1885, p3.

(30) In 1873 out of 63 inmates, 16 were orphans, 9 had fathers who were deceased, 10 had mothers who were deceased and 5 had been deserted by their parents. (MA Annual Reports, 1869-1873.) However, as Walkowitz points out, the prospective inmates of the Magdalen Asylum may have lied as a way of stopping the middle class philanthropists from intruding into their lives and the lives of their families. (J Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society, 1980, p36.)

(31) N Rafter has shown how the policies of American reformatories reduced women to the status of children. (N Rafter, "Chastizing the Unchaste: Social Control Functions of a Women's Reformatory, 1894-1931", in S Cohen and A Skull, Social Control and the State, Martin Robertson, 1983, p299.)

(32) Edgbastonia Directory, 1893-1914.

(33) See Chapter One for further details of admission procedures in reform institutions.

(34) The term 'diseased' was probably a veiled euphemism for venereal disease.

(35) MA Annual Report, 1863, p12.

(36) MA Annual Report, 1863, pp4-5.

(37) MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.

(38) MA Annual Report, 1861, preface.

(39) Josephine Butler campaigned against the forcible examination of women by male doctors under the Contagious Diseases Acts. Butler called these examinations 'instrumental rape'. (J Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society, 1980, p109.) Women who applied to reform institutions underwent a similar humiliation, even though it was 'voluntary'.

(40) MA Annual Report, 1863, p12.

(41) However, according to Mr Potts, Honorary Physician to the National Association for the Feeble-Minded, many of the inmates were 'feeble-minded'.

> Of 100 consecutive cases admitted to the asylum, 26 were feeble-minded, 7 were cases of moral insanity, one was epileptic, one was lunatic and one was deaf and dumb. (Dr Potts, Minutes of Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded, 1908, p470.)

This may indicate that the principles of the Magdalen Asylum were not always practised but it may be that Dr Potts was over-emphasising a point because he wanted a separate institution built for the mentally handicapped.

(42) Reverend Lea, Birmingham Gazette, March 14th 1876, p6.

(43) MA Annual Report, 1872, p4.

(44) See Chapter One for a discussion of the way in which reform institutions tried to recast working class women into respectable citizens.

(45) MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.

(46) Considering that inmates may well have lied about their past, it is perhaps not surprising that the Asylum took this precaution.

(47) MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.

(48) Inmates stayed voluntarily in the Asylum for this length of time - there was no statutory power to compel them to stay. If inmates wished to leave then they were legally free to do so and could not be forcibly kept against their will. However, inmates may well have viewed the Asylum rules and regulations as legally binding. Certainly, the Committee persuaded inmates to stay for this length of time. "If any female be desirous of leaving the Establishment before the Committee think right, proper means shall be used to induce her to remain; and should she persist in

her wish, she shall be discharged." (MA Annual Report, 1877, p15.)

(49) N Rafter, "Chastizing the Unchaste: Social Control Functions of a Women's Reformatory, 1894-1931", 1983, pp290-291.

(50) It is not known whether a uniform was worn in Birmingham Magdalen Asylum. Uniforms were common in asylums in the early part of the nineteenth century but this practice was said to have died out by mid-century. However, Miss Tracey, Factory Inspector, noted that only "one or two Homes have gone so far as to let them wear the garb of everyday life, discarding the hideous clothes so often adopted." (Miss Tracey, Annual Report of Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops, 1907, p203.)

(51) MA Annual Report, 1869, p4.

(52) B Littlewood and L Mahood, "Prostitutes, Magdalenes and Wayward Girls: Dangerous Sexualities of Working Class Women in Victorian Scotland", 1991, p166 have shown why a similar system was employed in Scotland.

(53) B Littlewood and L Mahood, "Prostitutes, Magdalenes and Wayward Girls: Dangerous Sexualities of Working Class Women in Victorian Scotland", 1991, p166. See also M Douglas, Purity and Danger, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976, for a discussion of the relationship between cleanliness and morality.

(54) MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.

(55) See Appendix 1.

(56) Regulations as to the Admission and Discharge of Inmates, MA Annual Reports, 1861-1863.

(57) MA Annual Report, 1863, pp12-13.

(58) MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.

(59) MA Annual Report, 1877, p15.

(60) Before the Factory Act, 1895 laundresses sometimes worked 90 hours a week in poor conditions with water-logged floors and over-heated ironing rooms. (Annual Report of Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops, 1897.) The Factory and Workshop Act of 1895 exempted three classes of laundry from the law. Asylums, Homes and other charitable institutions were free from legal constraints until 1907. One lady factory inspector reported that she had received a complaint of 19 hours per day being worked in a 'religious' laundry. (NUWW, Quarterly Magazine, December, 1900.) There was no indication in the Asylum's Annual Reports of the hours worked by inmates. Charitable institutions, in general, objected to state interference because it undermined the discipline of the institution by making the workers aware of their legal rights. (P Malcolmson, English Laundresses,

University of Illinois Press, 1986, p49.) By 1907, however, factory inspectors reported that most charitable institutions restricted their hours of work to less than the statutory 12 hours. (Annual Report of Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops, 1907, p204.)

(61) MA Annual Report, 1881, p4.

(62) MA Annual Report, 1903, p3.

(63) Domestic service was seen to be appropriate work for women both by the education system and members of the working class. Education for working class young women emphasised domestic skills. In 1882, 59,812 received instruction in domestic economy. By 1909 this had increased to 121,714. The Board of Education in 1905 stressed that a woman's place was either in her own home or working in someone else's. Trade unionists such as Henry Broadhurst and Joseph Arch also believed this. See P Horn, "The Education and Employment of Working Class Girls, 1870-1914", History of Education, Volume 17, Number 1, 1988, for a discussion of the domestication of girl pupils in schools.

(64) See Chapter One for a fuller discussion of the role of laundry work in charitable institutions.

(65) Miss Tracy, Lady Inspector, regretted that greater job choices were not offered to the inmates of charitable institutions. (Annual Report of Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops, 1907, p204.)

(66) N Rafter, "Chastizing the Unchaste: Social Control Functions of a Women's Reformatory, 1894-1931", 1983, p298.

(67) The irony that most of the Asylum's inmates were former domestic servants escaped the Asylum Committee. Of course it is not known whether the majority of prostitutes were ex-domestic servants. Domestic servants tended to predominate in rescue and reform institutions. Furthermore, the majority of working class single women were employed as domestic servants.

(68) MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914. Domestic service was certainly the largest occupation for women. J Rendall has shown that by the 1880s about a third of young women were employed in domestic service both because of a growth in demand and the difficulties of finding other jobs. (J Rendall, Women in an Industrializing Society: England 1750-1880, Basil Blackwell, 1990, pp98-102) See also P Horn, The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant, Gill and Macmillan, 1975.

(69) Census Abstracts indicate a wide range of female occupations apart from domestic service. There were 13,827 women employed as indoor servants in 1881 but women were also employed in the textile, paper, manufactory, furniture and metal trades.(Census of England and Wales 1881, Ages, Condition as to Marriage, Occupations, both places and infirmaries. Volume 111, 1893,

pp264-272.)Miss Tracey, Lady Inspector also regretted that asylum, penitentiaries and Homes did not offer a wider range of occupations. The sameness of the work and its want of real interest, she believed, had a negative effect on inmates. (Annual Report of Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops, 1907, p204.) See also George Bansbury, Birmingham Working People, Integrated Publishing Services, 1989, pp192-198 and Carl Chinn They Worked All Their Lives, 1988, pp86-88, for a discussion of the jobs available to working class women in Birmingham.

(70) The Magdalen Asylum's Committee seemed to be threatened by the preventive work of the BLACPYG, stressed that prevention was not cure and claimed that reform was as urgently needed as prevention.(MA Annual Report, 1881, p3.)

(71) Domestic service was still the single largest occupation for women in Birmingham. See George Bansbury Birmingham Working People, 1989, pp192-198.

(72) N Rafter, "Chastizing the Unchaste: Social Control Functions of a Women's Reformatory, 1894-1931", p297.

(73) L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990, p163.

(74) F Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy in 19th Century England, Clarendon Press, 1980, p148.

(75) See Census of England and Wales 1881, Ages, Condition as to Marriage, Occupations, both places and infirmaries, Volume 111, 1893, pp264-272.

(76) See Chart 4 for a more detailed breakdown.

(77) Vigilance Record, February, 1902, p3.

(78) Prochaska indicates that the wages of Midland servants amounted to about 2-3 shillings a week. These servants would have been employed by 'small tradespeople'. Indeed, Prochaska argues, "artisans and tradespeople were the usual customers at the workhouses and charitable institutions". (F Prochaska, "Female Philanthropy and Domestic Service in Victorian England", Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, 1981, p82-83.)

(79) See M Douglas, Purity and Danger, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976, for a discussion of the relationship between cleanliness and religion.

(80) E Bristow, Vice and Vigilance, Purity Movements in Britain since 1700, 1978, p71, L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1991, p91 and J Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society, 1980, p71, have all demonstrated the links between penance and laundry work.

(81) P Malcolmson, English Laundresses, 1986, pp57-61.

(82) P Malcolmson, English Laundresses, 1986, pp93-94.

(83) Miss Tracey, Lady Inspector, criticised charitable institutions for their out-dated machinery, "Unscreened ironing stoves are a feature of almost every laundry ... The heat created by them is simply unbearable, and I am told some-times that in the summer the girls are almost 'melted' ... The removal of steam in the wash-house was a matter that had received no attention in a large number of Homes. I think it was looked upon as a necessary evil which a wet day merely served to aggravate". (Annual Report of Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops, 1907, pp203-204.)

(84) MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.

(85) There were periodical improvements: new machinery was installed when the Asylum moved to Clarendon Road and the floor relaid; further new machinery was supplied in 1906; better equipment in 1909. Despite these improvements it was thought desirable that laundry should be done by hand. (MA Annual Report, 1909, p4.) Technological improvements were only welcomed when it improved the quality of the laundry output and improved the health of the inmates - not when it merely eased the burden of hard work. (Daily Gazette, March 12th 1878) These improvements were made in the early part of the 20th century probably as a consequence of the Factory Act of 1907 which brought charities under the control of the 1895 Act. New technology brought further dangers. Malcolmson maintains that working on unguarded machinery, unfenced drying belts and hydro-extractors increased the risk of physical injury. (P Malcolmson, English Laundresses, 1986, p90.) This may also have applied in the Magdalen Asylum although there were no records of accidents.

(86) MA Annual Report, 1898, pp3-4.

(87) P Malcolmson, English Laundresses, 1986, p67.

(88) Initially, inmates did not receive wages for their domestic labour. In 1877 a graded system of payments were made, based on good conduct and efficient work. Small bonuses were given to those inmates who had merited it. This system encouraged habits of industry, (Daily Gazette, March 12th, 1878, p6.) and the middle class virtue of thrift. The judicious use of a financial incentive also helped discipline and encouraged the female inmates to help make the laundry more profitable. Payments were part of a national trend. In 1879 Clewer inmates were allowed to earn money by sewing during their leisure hours. (V Bonham, A Place in Life, 1992, p208.)

(89) Miss Tracey, Lady Inspector noted that laundry work had the advantage of requiring only a small capital outlay in the first instance and was immediately remunerative. (Annual Report of Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops, 1907, pp203-204.)

(90) L Mahood, "The Magdalene's Friend, Prostitution and Social Control in Glasgow, 1869-1890", Women's Studies International Forum, Volume 13, Numbers 1/2, 1990, p56.

(91) MA Annual Reports, 1874-1885.

(92) As the subscription list diminished - in 1862 subscriptions amounted to £326 19s 3d whereas it had decreased to £261 by 1886 - the Committee expressed concern about the Asylum's financial stability. (MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.) By 1889 the financial situation had become quite desperate so they dispensed with a paid secretary; in 1895 they dispensed with the paid chaplain, reduced the number of inmates, reduced the number of staff and encouraged economy from the Superintendent. (MA Annual Report, 1895, p3.) Practically each year there was a financial crisis as they tried to raise sufficient monies to pay the mortgage, ground rent and building works. Legacies, such as that of Mrs James Lloyd who left £2,000, often stopped the immediate bankruptcy of the Asylum. In the early part of the twentieth century the financial position revived under Reverend Blissard. More generous church collections, concerts given by artistes, improved laundry earnings and increased subscriptions helped the economic stability of the Asylum. (MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.)

(93) MA Annual Report, 1887, pp4-5.

(94) MA Annual Report, 1901, p6.

(95) MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.

(96) MA Annual Report, 1878, p6.

(97) MA Annual Report, 1878, p6.

(98) See M Vicinus, Independent Women, Virago, 1985, pp74-84 and V Bonham, A Place in Life, 1992.

(99) MA Annual Report, 1870.

(100) MA Annual Report, 1895.

(101) F Finnegan, Poverty and Prostitution: A Study of Victorian Prostitutes in York, Cambridge, 1979 has suggested that this type of religious indoctrination was both unnecessary and counter-productive. Inmates, she argues were put off by the emphasis on religion and absconded. However, religion was central to the Asylum Committee's philosophy so it was highly unlikely that a religious approach would be jettisoned.

(102) MA Annual Report, 1886, p5.

(103) MA Annual Report, 1875, p4.

(104) MA Annual Report, 1875, p5.

(105) MA Annual Reports, 1904-1914.
(106) MA Annual Reports, 1900-1914.

(107) Mahood indicates that one third of Scottish inmates "chose not to accept the path of reform." (L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1990, p100.)

(108) In 1890 one inmate was sent to prison for one month because she had taken some clothes belonging to the Matron. This indicates the difficulty inmates faced in running away. (MA Annual Report, 1890.) See Chart 4 for a more detailed breakdown.

(109) Birmingham Gazette, March 11th 1873, p8.

(110) Birmingham Gazette, March 11th 1873, p8.

(111) Birmingham Gazette, March 10th 1874, p6.

(112) Birmingham Gazette, April 13th 1886, p3.

(113) Birmingham Gazette, March 29th 1890, p3.

(114) Birmingham Gazette, May 29th 1891, p6.

(115) Ill health, epidemics of diphtheria also diminished the output of the laundry. (MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.)

(116) Birmingham Gazette, March 29th 1887, p3.

(117) MA Annual Reports, 1861-1914.

(118) Census Returns, 1871; 1881; 1891.

(119) Rebellion could, of course, have been due to external factors such as the time of the year, the weather, family pressures but the correlation between staff and rebellion is striking.

(120) The Matron was also seen to play a crucial role in the financial stability of the Asylum. Laundry work suffered when supervision and discipline were lax. Under an incompetent laundry matron the standard declined and receipts diminished. (MA Annual Report, 1869, p5.) On the other hand, when an efficient Laundry Matron was employed the laundry was placed on a firmer financial footing. (MA Annual Report, 1870, p5.)

(121) MA Annual Report, 1872, p3.

(122) See Chart 4 for a detailed breakdown.

(123) See Chart 4 for a detailed breakdown. However, returning inmates to friends and family could have been a euphemism for failure. As F Finnegan has pointed out some inmates sent home because they were unmanageable. (F Finnegan, Poverty and Prostitution, 1979, p206.

(124) Why this was so was never stated.

(125) Edgbastonia, June 1890.

(126) Birmingham Gazette, March 11th 1873, p8.

(127) See F Prochaska, "Female Philanthropy and Domestic Service in Victorian England", 1981, p83.

(128) Sometimes they travelled quite far. In February 1903, for instance, Miss Wilkinson visited three women in Lancashire. (Addendum to the MA Annual Report, 1902, p7)

(129) Birmingham Gazette, March 29th 1887, p3.

(130) Birmingham Gazette, April 24th, 1888.

Inmates of the Magdalen Asylum

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	MAGDALEN ASYLUM							
2								
3	DATES	NOS AV	NOS APPLIED	ABSCONSION	LEFT	TO FRIENDS	DISMISSED	TO SERVICE
4								
5	1861	15	25	4	5	8		11
6	1863	26	76		19	8	2	15
7	1865	25	96	1	23	5	5	11
8	1866	32	107	6		6	8	14
9	1868	38	132	7	23	9	7	14
10	1869		136	6	2	12	6	11
11	1870		119	7	38	13	6	13
12	1872	28	121	1	16	14	1	15
13	1873	44	78	0	6	22	0	18
14	1874		82	1	6	22	7	18
15	1875		91	6	25	14	3	17
16	1876			3	7	12	3	5
17	1877		143	0	8	18	2	5
18	1878		82	0	8	7	1	11
19	1881		77	0	11	4	0	12
20	1882	33	103	2	14	4	0	15
21	1885	28	66	1	18	14	0	17
22	1886	37	94	4	20	8	0	13
23	1887	42	117	2	14	17	0	16
24	1889	40	62	0	14	12	2	13
25	1891	42		0	5	8	1	16
26	1898	39		0		5	0	
27	1901	25	51	0	2	8	0	11
28	1902		67	0	2	10	0	16
29	1903		46	0	0	6	0	16
30	1904		35	0	0	6	0	2
31	1905		51	0	0	11	0	9
32	1906	29	56	0	0	7	6	7
33	1907	36	67	0	0	5	7	12
34	1908	42	67	0	0	3	5	12
35	1909	38	82	0	0	8	14	14
36	1910	39	89	0	0	14	1	10
37	1911	39	76	0	0	6	1	11
38	1912	30	58	0	0	7	2	12
39	1913	27	71	0	0	12	0	12

Nos Av = average numbers in the Asylum in any one year
Nos Applied = average numbers who applied to the Asylum
Absconsion = number of inmates who ran away
Left = number of inmates who left of their own accord
To Friends = number of inmates who left to return to friends or family
Dismissed = number of inmates who were dismissed
To Service = number of inmates who found jobs as a domestic servant

Compiled from Magdalen Asylum Annual Reports

Chapter four: Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home

Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home was both similar to and different from the Magdalen Asylum. It certainly had very distinct beginnings in that it was influenced by the feminist inspired social purity movement. Its origins lay in the rescue work of a notable suffragist, Mrs Mary Showell Rogers,[1] who visited female prisoners in the courts and prisons:[2]

> She founded and was the first Secretary, of the Society for the Rescue of Fallen Women. For over seven years she visited the female prisoners at the Moor Street Police Court four mornings a week, and spent her Sunday afternoons in reading and talking to the unfortunate girls waiting for trial in the cells.[3]

At the suggestion of James Stansfield, the Liberal M.P.[4] this ad hoc group evolved into a Rescue Society.[5] Largely through the inspiration of Ellice Hopkins, the Rescue Society became the Ladies' Association for the Care of Friendless Girls in 1878.[6] The newly founded LACFG set up a small Home, in 1878, specifically for the purpose of rescuing young girls and women "on the brink of ruin and training them for service"[7] in Spring Road, considered to be the first of its kind in Birmingham, which housed 8 or 9 girls.[8] Shortly afterwards a larger house in Penelope Place, Bristol Street was used.[9] In 1884, the two houses adjoining were added. The Home later moved to Ladywood House, St Vincent Street and was opened on March 5th 1891 by Reverend Brown, the minister of Wycliffe Chapel.[10] Like the Magdalen Asylum, Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home was taken over by the Association for the Care and Training of Unmarried Mothers in the

1920's.[11]

The feminist influence on the women managers[12] suggests that an alternative system of reform might be offered to that of the Magdalen Asylum. In some ways this was so; in other ways not. The reform programme was modified at the Home but it still trained women for domestic service and promoted the same cultural imperialism as the Asylum. At no time was the system of reform ever questioned.

Unlike the Magdalen Asylum, the nature of the Home set up by the LACFG changed over the years as other institutions were built in Birmingham. Initially the Home was a shelter to which Police Court Visitors took young women until work was found for them. When other shelters and homes were built in the city, the LACFG took on long term cases and encouraged women to stay in the Home for two years, which was the same term as in the Magdalen Asylum.[13] Confinement therefore became the rule not the exception with the same concomitant results as the Asylum.

One might expect, given its historical antecedents and the composition of the Committee,[14] that the LACFG would offer a different perspective on prostitutes and prostitution from that of the Magdalen Asylum.[15] Even the presentation of the Annual Reports differed stylistically. Whereas the Magdalen Asylum Annual Reports emphasised the religious and political philosophy of the Committee, the LACFG reports tended towards the prosaic by illustrating work routine rather than the latter's philosophical

position. This made it difficult to tease out the attitudes held by the LACFG managers towards prostitutes and prostitution.

Nevertheless, one can still discern the philosophical underpinnings of the LACFG which were based on feminist beliefs. Although the LACFG Committee shared the same conviction as the Magdalen Asylum that female prostitution was a problem, their attitudes and values were markedly different. The LACFG believed in the essence of womanhood: women could link up across the vast divide not only of class but of innocence and experience.[16] In this they were heavily influenced by the ideas of Ellice Hopkins who argued that women must prove by their actions that 'fallen women' were not a class apart. Ellice Hopkins insisted that to regard such women as an outcast class was uncivilised behaviour and that all women should be seen as one:

> As things are now, men divide us women into two classes: us pure women, from whom nothing is too good, and those others for whom nothing is too bad. But let us prove by our actions that our womanhood is ONE; that a sin against our lost sisters is a sin against us; and that we do not, and will not, and cannot, believe that unmitigated cruelty to woman ... is bound up as a necessity in man's nature.[17]

It appeared as if, for the LACFG, the unity of women over-rode differences in class background, religious beliefs and political preferences. Sisterhood solidarity was proclaimed. Even class inequality was recognised to be gendered by the LACFG which blamed economic reasons for prostitution rather than the causes espoused by the Magdalen Asylum. Annual Reports laid stress upon the inability of women to find work and the lowering of wages

below subsistence level. In some ways the LACFG advocated political, rather than individual, solutions to the economic difficulties faced by working class women.[18] The vote, it was claimed, would eradicate these injustices.[19]

Religion was not emphasised as much in the Annual Reports of the Home as it was in the Asylum. This might be because, although a Christian organisation, the managers of the LACFG did not share a common religious belief whereas those of the Magdalen Asylum did. Indeed it was stressed that the LACFG was unsectarian in character. Religion might have been played down in order to minimise the differences between Quakers, Unitarians and other Nonconformists. Nevertheless, religion was still a powerful force. Both the Asylum and the Home shared a redemptive approach but the punishing God of the former was replaced by a forgiving God in the latter. Although prostitution was considered a sin, prostitutes were viewed less as sinners and more as victims of social injustice. Penitence was rarely expected. Instead love was seen to be of great assistance in bringing the inmates back to the Godly fold. Inmates were still to be saved from everlasting fire in the same way as the inmates of the Magdalen Asylum, but the emphasis was on love and forgiveness rather than on punishment. The Committee of the LACFG "could not imagine a higher work than one woman trying to help another, who perhaps had been more sinned against than sinning".[20] To a large extent women were regarded as victims, led astray by wicked, debauched men who abandoned them when women had lost their first flush of

youth as the following quote suggests:

> Many of these cases are pathetic in the sadness and misery they reveal of the home life of our fellow citizens. Young girls who were surrounded by good influences in their early life have been led away later by bad men into ways of vice, dazed by attention, and the prospect of an easy luxuriant life, but afterwards, cast off, despised, and utterly neglected, left to provide themselves.[21]

In some respects the philosophy of the LACFG was just as gendered as that of the Magdalen Asylum because inmates were not given responsibility for their own actions. Prostitutes were considered to be the perennial prey of wicked, debauched men and were viewed as feeble, passive and pathetic victims. When the Magdalen Asylum Committee perceived women as sinners they viewed women as adults who made decisions. When the LACFG viewed women as helpless victims, they saw them as children who were incapable of exercising moral judgment.

The notion of a shared womanhood favoured by the LACFG was undermined by class. Feminist hopes of unity collapsed in the face of the LACFG's practice. The selection procedures of Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home, the Home set up by the LACFG, resembled those of the Magdalen Asylum rather than those of an institution based on female solidarity. Women were categorised and classified into worthy and unworthy cases: only the former were considered as potential inmates. The Home held comparable attitudes towards applicants as the Asylum. Like the Magdalen Asylum, the Home was not particularly interested in long term offenders and "does not as a rule, take up cases of long-standing immorality or dishonesty".[22] Instead, the Home targeted younger women. It

dealt with the same types of women as the Asylum: young, local, probably working class,[23] first time offenders whose ages ranged from 16 to 30. Out of eighteen women in the home in 1891, 10 were under 20, 7 were under 30 and one was aged 30.[24] As the following extract suggests young women were deemed to be malleable and open to reform. Older prostitutes were not:[25]

> The Ladies' Association <is> for the recovery of girls who have given way to temptation for a short time, or who have been convicted of a first offence.[26]

Older, therefore presumably more 'experienced', women were also rejected because the Home feared the risk of moral contamination. If women of a "more depraved character were admitted" and thrown into daily contact with younger and impressionable women then reform work would be endangered.[27] Moreover, the Home, like the Asylum, only took those who were penitent:

> To reclaim and train for useful work young girls who are fallen, but anxious to do better, especially those found at Police Courts.[28]

The recruitment of such deserving cases provides further insights into the tensions which existed between gender and class. Middle class women actively recruited 'fallen women' from courts, prisons, workhouses and brothels.[29] Working class prospective inmates were positively vetted and selected by middle class volunteers.[30] One or two of the ladies visited the Public Office (in Moor Street) every morning before the arrival of the magistrates and saw, separately, every young girl who was charged with "dishonesty, or unruly, or disorderly conduct, a number of

whom had been picked up by police for soliciting, brought up before the magistrate's court and sentenced".[31] These interviews acted as a rigorous selection mechanism which enabled the Home to pick out the worthy candidates and reject those considered less so.

The Home's intervention meant that first offenders were often placed in the care of female volunteers rather than sent to prison.[32] This suggests a humanitarian commitment by the Home to protect new offenders from both punishment and the hardened criminal found in prisons. It was intended to prevent recidivism by its attempt at reformation rather than detention.

> ...an admirable arrangement which has been in force for some years in Birmingham, is gradually being adopted in many of our large towns. A number of ladies appointed by the magistrates visit the prisons in turn every morning, and have private interviews with the women and girls who are to appear before the Bench. These ladies hear the prisoners' own account of the affair that has brought them into trouble; accompany them into court; urge in their favour any circumstances attenuating which may exist; and in the case of first offenders, often induce the magistrates to hand the girls over to their keeping rather than send them to prison. When this is done, they place their charges in training homes, where they are carefully prepared for a fresh start in life.[33]

However, first offenders were not discharged but were confined in Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home for two years.[34] Charity, to some extent, replaced the state in exacting retribution for breaking the moral law. Furthermore, the liaison which took place between the magistrates, the police and the Home could be viewed as a form of class control whereby charitable enterprises colluded with the state in order to instil bourgeois notions of morality

into working class young women. Indeed, it has been argued that reform institutions acted as an informal extension of the prison system.[35] The following extract certainly demonstrates a positive relationship between the magistrates and the LACFG:

> The magistrates were often glad to hand a first offender over to a lady's care, or, by attending at the court, she could help those evidently wronged, or not needing imprisonment.[36]

The notion that philanthropic women were agents of a repressive state, however, underestimates the humanitarian motivation of those involved in the LACFG, many of whom genuinely believed that Homes offered a better alternative to prison for women who had been convicted of soliciting.[37]

There were, however, crucial differences as well as similarities, between the Magdalen Asylum and the Home which, to some degree, were due to a commitment to feminism. Many of the ideas about Home management derived from Ellice Hopkins. One of the chief critics of the penitentiary type system, Ellice Hopkins wanted to create a new type of institution based on mutual love and respect. Penitentiaries, she argued, were unrelentingly punitive. Hours of enforced silence brought distressing memories to the fore; frequent religious services made young women think too much of sin; and harsh work discouraged those who had been used to the freedom of the streets.[38] The following extract, from one of Hopkins' polemical pamphlets, tells not about penitentiaries but about her attitudes towards them. She paints penitentiaries as dreary, ugly, uncomely places in which only

the desperate sought refuge:

> ...how is it, I ask, that Home after Home I go into is so utterly wanting in this most essential element of brightness and beauty with which we so carefully surround ourselves in our own homes? Unless I had seen it for myself I could not have believed that dreariness and ugliness was such a fine art as we have made it for the benefit of these poor girls. The dingy walls, often of some rhubarb-and-magnesia hue that physics the sense to look at it; the torn almanac, generally unpinned at one corner, and flapping forlornly in the draft; the spiritual posters in the shape of hideous black and white texts hung up; no bright pictures nor pretty illuminated texts to be seen in dormitory or ironing room. In one Home a row of punchy brown holland bags were hung up round the workroom instead of bright bookcases...these poor girls, shut up with their low memories, low thoughts, low objects, low aims, they want every help, within and without, that brightness and beauty can give them to lift them up.[39]

Hopkins' criticisms of penitentiaries were shared by the LACFG Committee who thought that large establishments were often too institutionalised, formal, gloomy and depressing.[40] In contrast to the Magdalen Asylum, Hopkins and the LACFG believed that a place of reform should be more like a home than an institution. An ideal home would consist of a cottage or small house which held about 12 girls and would be run by a Christian motherly woman who would create a homely atmosphere by making it pretty and attractive by the use of bright pictures and furnishings.

To counter the penitentiary system, Hopkins' theory was put into practice by the LACFG. The rejection of asylums in favour of 'homes' marked an obvious shift from a punitive model of reform to a compassionate one. In contrast to the Magdalen Asylum, the Home usually held less inmates.[41] The Home was a rather elegant, Georgian style, red brick building, reminiscent of solid middle

class housing stock rather than a penitentiary. It even had a small front garden. Homes such as these were preferred to larger institutions because they were considered to be more humane places.[42]

The naming of the institution, 'Home', was also significant. Homes were not only considered the natural habitat of women but also places, allegedly, of comfort and support. Annual Reports stressed that the Home was not an institution but a Home where inmates had the right to be mothered and treated with untiring sympathy.[43] Appeals were made to subscribers to donate books, ornaments, pictures and other pleasing artifacts to make the Home a brighter place in which to live.[44] Newspaper reports of the Annual Meetings reflect the concern of the organisers to promote a pleasant atmosphere and a homely environment. The yearly visit by the Lady Mayoress emphasised:

> the bright and cheerful appearance of the girls. She found the home splendidly kept, everything neat and spotlessly clean.[45]

Annual Reports, and to some extent the local press, clearly attempted to portray a positive image of the Home. There was another side to the caring story. The name 'Home', for instance, was full of ambivalent meaning. Inmates enjoyed an enforced family existence. Reform may have taken place within a less punitive context than the Magdalen Asylum but the language of love was rhetorical and disguised real relationships of power.[46] The maternalistic approach of Mrs Rogers' Committee was still based upon inequality. Mothering was not only a bond of

affection but a bond of control. The association between the lady and the inmate was an association between the parent (the older philanthropist) and the child (the younger inmate). Mothers, albeit gentle and kind, disciplined, controlled and regulated the lives of their children. In effect the relationship between the Committee members and inmates remained one between adult and child, middle and working class, superior and underling and ultimately the powerful and powerless. Female solidarity was therefore weakened, if not destroyed, by the inequalities in the relationship.

As the perspective of the Home's Committee contrasted with that of the Magdalen Asylum, one might assume that life inside the Home was equally dissimilar. However, there was only a marginal difference between the respective institutions. Mrs Rogers' Home may have been a benign institution but it was, like the Asylum, ultimately coercive. Both institutions widened the gap between the inmates and respectable women by detaining the former; both shared a belief in the reformative power of a long confinement;[47] and both placed a premium on creating a new identity for each inmate.[48]

As in the Magdalen Asylum, days in the Home were punctuated by work, prayer and guided leisure all of which had the same purpose of promoting gender and class conformity. It could therefore be argued that inmates in the feminist Nonconformist institution fared little better than those in the one organised by Anglican

men and women. During their residence at the Home inmates were taught to do housework, cooking and needlework.[49] In 1890 they knitted 50 pairs of stockings, dressed dolls and made a great number of fancy articles.[50] From 1898 each person had a small garden to tend but it was never clear whether this was to grow vegetables or flowers for her own consumption or for sale. Laundry work, as in the Asylum, remained the most important occupation available for the majority of inmates:

> Unless a girl be physically unfitted, it is the rule to send her into the laundry, where she remains until it comes to her turn to fill up a vacancy in the house departments. Many choose to continue in the laundry, and so become good laundresses.[51]

Laundry work may not have been regarded as a penance in the Home but it served a similar function. Physical endeavour was thought to be conducive to good health and a suitable outlet for anger and restlessness. Hard physical work was therefore encouraged because it was believed to exert a steady influence:

> the wild restlessness, the lawlessness, the animal passions and excitement of the old street life, are best worked off by muscular exertion, and that sedentary work must be especially bad just at first.[52]

The above extract implies that laundry work was good exercise. In practice, however, laundry remained a punitive task. Laundry was still labour intensive in that it depended on handpower rather than machinery. In addition, no worker was able to escape from the damp atmosphere and the arduous work associated with laundries. Presumably the inmates of Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home suffered from the similar complaints of rheumatism and

bronchitis as other workers.[53]

Laundry work - whether done for 8 or 18 hours - also reinforced the social order. Working class women were restricted to training which suited their predestined role in life - as domestic servants. Once again, just as in the Asylum, no attempt was made to widen the job opportunities of the inmates. Despite their commitment to equal rights, the Committee of the LACFG narrowly defined the potential occupation of the young women to that of unskilled, lowly paid domestic servants which confirmed the latter's place in the class pecking order.[54]

Furthermore, laundry work embodied the principles of good capitalist enterprise as it became more and more a competitive business.[55] Laundry receipts generally amounted to about half the total income.[56] Laundry work, as in the Magdalen Asylum, paid many of the bills: but not all of them. Financially the Home - which was in a far less parlous state than the Asylum - depended on charitable donations and bequests rather than laundry income. Half of the money raised for the day to day running of the Home still came from volunteers.[57] This money went into the upkeep of the Home as salaries were quite low in comparison to the income of the institution.[58] Consequently, the Home rarely went in to deficit and even when it did (as in 1910) subscribers bailed them out.[59] Concern was expressed from the 1890s that subscriptions were declining due to the resignation and death of its aging supporters. Nevertheless, financial problems were never as serious as they were in the Asylum, possibly because the Home

retained a healthy subscription list.

Possibly as a consequence of the Home's financial success, possibly as a result of different philosophies, laundry work was never as harsh as in some charitable institutions.[60] Inmates worked on average less than an eight hour day. They worked from about 9am-6:45pm each day, except Saturdays when they finished at 3pm and Sundays which were kept free for worship and prayer. These long hours, however, were punctuated by quite generous breaks. At 12pm, there was a short interval for prayer. Lunch was followed at 1pm followed by another 'break' when the girls "amuse themselves with sewing or fancy work" until 2pm.[61] Work continued until tea-time at 4:30pm when girls were 'entertained' by a suitably amusing or interesting story. Work resumed until 6.45pm.

Another distinct difference between the Asylum and the Home was the emphasis placed on leisure in the latter. The Asylum offered its inmates limited opportunities for leisure. In contrast, work at the Home was punctuated by carefully planned and well regulated leisure activities.[62] Leisure was organised for pragmatic and humanitarian reasons as well as controlling and reforming ones. When inmates were 'relaxing' they were supervised by volunteers. Organised leisure lightened the load of the Matrons and the other workers, by giving them a much needed rest of at least an hour a day.[63] In addition, leisure relieved the monotony of inmates' lives, neutralised the "irksomeness of the

daily routine"[64] and compensated for loss of liberty. More importantly, it acted as a mechanism for control in that inappropriate energy was redirected into positive channels:

> A good game affords a healthy vent for their animal spirits, and I may add the animal passions. These poor girls when they first come into our hands are generally afflicted with all sorts of morbid fancies, physical depression, and too often vile animal passions, showing themselves in outbursts of wildest rage, resulting from the physical and moral derangements of their whole being.[65]

Furthermore, leisure acted as a mechanism for moral reform. Certain pursuits were believed to have a beneficial effect on the inmates because they were the means by which inmates were introduced to pure and worthy thoughts. Leisure activities also developed the domestic skills learnt in the laundry. Leisure was much more varied than that in the Magdalen Asylum but its purpose remained the same: to modify and change the values, attitudes and behaviour of the inmates and to equip them with the skills to be domestic servants.

> We need hardly emphasise the importance of the endeavour to awaken an interest in healthy occupations and subjects of thought in the minds of these poor girls, who need every helpful influence we are able to exert to lead them upwards into a purer and a better life.[66]

Almost every evening for about an hour, different activities, usually divided into half hourly slots, were organised for the young women.[67] A whole range of 'useful' activities were devised for the inmates: every other Monday cutting out, needlework and maths, the other Monday presumably 'free'; Tuesday, texts read by some philanthropic lady - books that were read to the inmates

were always of a moral nature, or dealt with household management, domestic service or the sexual dangers facing working girls; alternate Wednesdays, musical drill and lessons in physiology, the other Wednesday the inmates attended church; Thursdays, domestic economy and reading; Friday reading and patching (which probably meant darning); alternate Saturdays, dictation.[68] In addition, from 1901, inmates were given lectures on purity, and by the Snowdrop League, Bible History and Temperance Reform.[69] Occasionally there were musical evenings, telescopic observation and scientific experiments by enthusiastic volunteers.[70]

Outside visits were organised (about six or seven times a year) by the Committee members, with a similar moral message in mind. Invitations to tea or garden parties at the homes of the Committee were a regular occurrence, particularly at the home of Mrs Wilson, the President.[71] Usually leisure involved quiet games, a tour of the surrounding countryside in open coaches or brakes, a walk in the park, a country ramble or boating on the lake.[72] Occasionally individuals like Mrs W A Cadbury lent her cottage for weekends which "gave many a real taste of country life and a nice break from the routine of the Home"[73] Several visits to places such as Sutton Park and the Botanical Gardens and outings to the Lickey Hills were organised in the summer months. Other recreational visits included boating trips and visits to the Missionary Exhibition, the Jubilee Procession, the Royal Visit to Birmingham, Curzon Hall, Coronation Pictures and Cinemotograph Pictures to see Scotts expedition, magic lantern

lectures and tours of the illuminations.[74] On one occasion, inmates were entertained by a lecture about travels in Africa illustrated by lime-light. An annual Christmas party was held at which magic lantern slides, musical entertainment and a gramophone were provided.[75] At one time Mr Wilfred Southall gave a lecture on Manners and Customs in Palestine with some of the inmates dressed in Eastern Costume.[76]

It can be argued that the leisure pursuits organised for the young women at Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home were respectable, middle class, quiet and subdued. Alcohol, fairs, riotous entertainments or other working class leisure pursuits were not encouraged. The traditional gender roles expected of middle class women were reinforced. At one and the same time the Home reinforced gendered class roles in limiting job opportunities whilst expanding horizons and offering alternatives in leisure. This is an excellent example of the ways in which concepts of class and gender shifted according to circumstance. Working class work was considered appropriate for working class women whereas working class leisure was not. It can only be assumed that through middle class leisure pursuits, young women might aspire to the cultural values of the middle class but not to their jobs.

As in the Magdalen Asylum, not every inmate accepted the class and gendered order imposed upon them by middle class women - but many more of them seemed to. According to reports from the ladies who helped organise the leisure activities, the Home was

fairly stable as inmates seemed to throw themselves wholeheartedly into the events organised for them:

> On Friday evenings the girls have musical drill for the first half hour. They seem to enjoy it very much, and do the exercises extremely well. Marching they take special pleasure in, and never get tired of it. The second half hour is occupied with simple physiological lessons. The girls take a very intelligent interest in the structure of their bodies, and most of them remember clearly what has been told them in former lessons.[77]

Inmates were, according to the Annual Reports, attentive, obedient and well behaved in these sessions. Those who read to the young women reported that the inmates appreciated the books read to them, and asked intelligent questions.[78] Annual Reports, however, tended to over-estimate success and under-estimate failure. Superficially, it appeared as if the Home was a happy, pleasurable environment more reminiscent of a girls' public school than a reformatory. However, another message - that of resistance - was also exhibited at these events. Occasionally, enthusiasm and enjoyment were not always conducive to good behaviour. In 1893 it was decided to stop secular music and singing because the inmates became too excited. It was replaced by less robust and quieter hymn singing and carols.[79] These young women were therefore not cowed, repressed victims but rather lively, outgoing young women who enjoyed a bit of fun. Boisterous and exuberant behaviour, of course, may have been a way of rebelling against the strict regime of the Home.

Annual Reports indicate that inmates generally wanted to stay until Christmas because they enjoyed these festivities so much.

Once again, it is unknown what the inmates really thought as their feelings and experiences were refracted through the writings of middle class philanthropists. Inmates may, of course, have had nowhere else but the workhouse to go,[80] unemployment may have been high and the weather harsh. Yet one inmate was reported to have said:

> I must tell you what a nice time we had here. Christmas morning everyone had seven presents each. The breakfast table looked so nice when we came down. Everyone was so excited we nearly forgot to have breakfast.[81]

Less than two out of every 25 inmates absconded each year which was actually no better than the Asylum for most years.[82] Between 1890 and 1914 only three inmates were ever dismissed.[83] Only one period of unrest was recorded. At the beginning of 1892 the Home held 24 inmates but only 13 remained at the end of the year because fewer women were admitted.[84] This could be seen as an example of resistance by the inmates to the values imposed upon them by the Home. Or, as in the Magdalen Asylum, it could have been due to the paid staff.

As in the Magdalen Asylum, paid staff made a significant impact on the lives of inmates. Once again this suggests that gender and class unity between staff and inmates could be either reinforced or threatened by forceful individuals. Paid workers could support or undermine the aims and objectives of the Home. Good staff were considered essential for the smooth organisation of the Home and the reformation of the inmates. Poor staff achieved the opposite. In 1892, for instance, the Committee feared that

the Home was disorganised, undisciplined and ill-managed because of the turnover of staff, the drunkenness of the workers and the loss of the Laundry Matron:[85]

> <1892 was a> year of much trial and perplexity...our Home had become much disorganised in discipline and management. With the relaxing of discipline and oversight, two of our working helpers, whose temptation formerly had been strong drink, fell again into the snare, and had to be dismissed...we trust our Home may soon regain the quiet power and efficiency which have been maintained in previous years. We desire it to be a true 'Home' to those who come under its roof, in which our girls may learn the 'sweet habit of living together.[86]

The organisers took a decision to limit numbers at this time because the unsettled atmosphere within the Home was not conducive to reform work. The change of Matron and the ill health of the staff were held responsible but there may have been other unadmitted reasons. However, if we take these Annual Reports at face value it seems as if key staff played a crucial role in ensuring the success or failure of Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home.

This period of unrest, in 1892, coincided with Miss Turner's office as Superintendent. Conversely in 1893, when a new Superintendent (Miss Thomasson) was appointed, the atmosphere within the Home improved. Miss Thomasson was given credit for providing a wonderful change in the moral atmosphere of the Home and for improving the discipline of the inmates.[87] When the next Superintendent, Sister Mary, otherwise known as Miss Scott, took over the situation improved still further. Sister Mary remained at the institution for over thirteen years until she died in 1911.[88] Under her supervision, the institution developed into the

kind of Home the organisers had wished to create.[89]

> The Home atmosphere had become more what was desired, more loving and appreciative - a fact due to the personal influence and unwearied devotion of the Lady Superintendent.[90]

Sister Mary apparently made it a "home in the best sense of the word",[91] and worked "assiduously among the poor and friendless, achieving most excellent results":[92]

> It is gratifying each year to record the happy inner life of our Home, under the wise and loving guidance of our revered Lady Superintendent, Sister Mary and her faithful and capable helper, Miss Short. This year has been particularly marked by the spirit of contentment amongst the girls, only two of them leaving before the end of their training time.[93]

One is therefore led to believe that Matrons made a significant difference to the running of the Home. However, criticising paid staff may well have reflected badly upon the Home so the fulsome praise given to some Matrons may have been due to a need to portray the Home in a positive light.

On leaving the Home, most inmates,[94] like their counterparts in the Asylum, were placed in domestic service. Some were encouraged to emigrate to Australia and Canada firstly because it helped inmates to make a fresh start, secondly because there were greater job opportunities and plenty of work in the colonies[95] and thirdly because it removed them from English shores to be a trouble elsewhere.[96] The rest married or returned to their friends and families.

According to the Annual Reports, the Home seemed to have succeeded in its reformative aim of turning young women into respectable domestic servants. It engendered a high degree of loyalty amongst the ex-inmates and many attempted to find jobs nearby, were frequent visitors and even spent their holidays there:

> The girls show how happy they have been during their two years training by their eagerness to have situations found for them near the Home and it is quite usual to see at the annual Parties two or three old girls enjoying everything with the rest.[97]

This may of course be because Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home was the only home they knew. Without funds for a holiday, without friends and family the Home might well have been the only place open to them when they took a break from work. Furthermore, Annual Reports do not indicate exactly how many young women returned to the Home.

Relationships between the Matron, Sister Mary, and the ex-inmates were particularly good. Letters were written to Sister Mary by those settled in domestic service. These letters expressed gratitude for the tender care they had experienced while in the Home.[98] Again, it is not known how many ex-inmates wrote to the Matron, whether these congratulatory letters were the norm or whether there were other, less flattering, notes written to the organisation by dissatisfied inmates. In addition, some ex-inmates did not wish their mistress or friends to know that they had been in the Home and entreated the Superintendent and other volunteers to keep it secret.[99] From this it seems that not all

shared the same devotion and loyalty to the Home - but it might not have been expedient to reveal their past to employers in case they were dismissed.

Conclusion

There are a number of concluding points to be made in relation to the Magdalen Asylum and Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home. Firstly, there was no single model of historical explanation which satisfactorily explained the process of reform in Birmingham. Neither gender, class nor religion as discrete categories adequately depicted the philosophy, the selection procedures, the work routines, education and leisure facilities on offer at the Asylum or the Home. Moreover, the categories of gender, class and religion were found to be inter-relational rather than separate entities. As was argued, attempts were made to transform working class women into a role that was as much shaped by class and religion as by gender - as domestic servants with a moral conscience. Dependent on religious beliefs, 'fallen' women were either viewed as sinners or victims. Whereas the leaders of the Anglican influenced Asylum tended to view their inmates as sinners, the leaders of the Nonconformist Home saw them as victims. From this it can be deduced that the categories of gender, class and religion were fluctuating rather than fixed ones. These categories, however, did not fully explain the daily life in the respective institutions as much depended on individual paid staff who enacted the policies.

There were also critical differences between the two institutions. The Asylum was certainly a less appealing reformatory than the Home. Even though the Home may have made little impact on the reformatory process in general it may have had great significance to the individuals concerned. For those incarcerated in a benign institution rather than a punitive one it might have made a whole world of difference - tantalisingly we can never know because those voices have been lost. Why the Home was a more congenial institution remains hidden. On the one hand, it could have been because the women who managed the Home were prompted by visions of female solidarity. On the other hand, Nonconformist religious beliefs might have played some part. It was probably a mixture of both.

Regardless of these differences, both the Magdalen Asylum and Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home shared a similar rehabilitative aim of reshaping young working class women into honest, reliable, compliant, morally upright, hard-working domestic servants - and this regardless of the gender composition, religious faith and political convictions of their founders. Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home marked a shift in the methods of reform but the final product was intended to be the same. Consequently one is led to believe that Nonconformist, female involvement made only a marginal difference to the overall nature of reform in Birmingham. The more compassionate approach of the Home lacked strategic significance in that Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home did not mark a new stage in the reform of prostitutes. It thus remained part of the 'archipelago' of reform, differing only slightly from

the asylums and penitentiaries found in York, Windsor, Ireland and Scotland.

Reform, however, was a reactive response to the perceived problem of prostitution. In the 1880's a new movement emerged which attempted to tackle the problem at source. Inspired largely by Ellice Hopkins', Nonconformists in Birmingham turned to a proactive approach which emphasised prevention rather than cure.

Notes and References

(1) Mrs Showell Rogers epitomises the sort of women who participated in reform politics. At the age of 44, with a long history of political involvement, Mrs Showell Rogers, wife of Councillor William Rogers embarked on the second stage of her charitable career. (Birmingham Faces and Places, 1893.) Previously Mrs Showell Rogers had had a distinguished career in local religious, educational and social movements. She had formerly been a Sunday school teacher, had taken an active part in the Education League in Birmingham and had been a founder of the Birmingham hospital for women. Largely as a result of her involvement in promoting the welfare of women, Mrs Showell Rogers became the Honorary Secretary of the Birmingham Suffrage Association. (NUWW Quarterly Magazine, 1891.)

(2) Mrs Showell Rogers became involved in rescue work in response to a suggestion by one of the magistrates, Mr George Goodrick, an old friend of her husband "who had called her attention to the large numbers of young girls who were brought before the magistrates at Moor Street, for the first time," (Edgbastonia, Nov-December, 1889) and by a request of the Chairman of the Watch Committee. Initially a 'respectable woman' was employed to look after those discharged in her own home until work was found for the young offender. (Faces and Places, Vol V, 1893, p117.) Other women, besides those found guilty of soliciting, were also visited.

(3) Edgbastonia, June, 1899.

(4) One can only assume that this was James Stansfield, Liberal M.P., who campaigned to repeal the Contagious Diseases Act. Stansfield was never referred to at any other time in the Annual Reports or the press in connection with the LACFG.

Stansfield was never referred to at any other time in the Annual Reports or the press in connection with the LACFG.

(5) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, 1891, pp7-10.

(6) The LACFG was inspired by a visit to Birmingham by Ellice Hopkins. A similar system had long been in operation in Brighton and other towns. Hopkins provided the name - the LACFG - and helped create the philosophy of Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home. (Report of Ladies Rescue Association, 1878.)

(7) This generally meant those who were charged with soliciting and who came before the courts for the first time. (Advertisement for LACFG, 1881.)

(8) LACFG Annual Report, 1913, p9.

(9) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, 1891, pp7-10.

(10) LACFG Annual Report, 1913, p9.

(11) However, it still remained a different institution from that of the Magdalen Asylum. It retained its own Committees and became a home for single mothers, who used it as a base from which to work, rather than a reformatory.(Association for the Care and Training of Unmarried Mothers and their Babies, Annual Report, 1921.)

(12) See Chapter Two for a discussion of this and Appendix 1 for further information.

(13) Birmingham Daily Post, February 17th, 1906, p9.

(14) The LACFG Committee were elected by members in the same way as the Magdalen Asylum. However there was no record of a proxy vote for Ladies. Similarly, all offices were gratuitous.

(15) See Chapter Two for a fuller explanation of the composition of the LACFG. In addition, whereas the Magdalen Asylum identified with the Church Penitentiary Association the LACFG drew inspiration from the social purity movement. For instance the LACFG belonged to the Birmingham and Midland Counties Vigilance Association.

(16) LACFG Annual Reports, 1891-1914.

(17) Ellice Hopkins, Notes on Penitentiary Work, 1879, Hatchards, p9.

(18) Some Quaker women believed that rescue work perpetuated the problem rather than solved it.

> They remove girls from the streets, and so leave room for others to step in and take their places. They, as it were, keep the market from being overstocked, thus preventing

there from preference; but that day will come infinitely sooner when rescue workers awake and work on economic lines, and also when, as a nation, we agree that it is no longer to be tolerated that mere existence for thousands of women is only possible by prostitution; also that no industrial women's wage is so good as the wage she can earn on the streets. (Industrial Women, and How to Help Them, Friends Quarterly Examiner, 1900, p180.)

This group, as indicated in the quote above, proposed radical structural alternatives to the problem of prostitution. To their mind, prostitution was based on the unequal distribution of wealth rather than personal immorality. Like the LACFG, they believed that female suffrage would eradicate inequality.

(19) Mary Littleboy, Friends Quarterly Examiner, March 24th, 1911.

(20) Birmingham Daily Post, February 2nd, 1901, p7.

(21) LACFG Annual Report, 1902, p11.

(22) Edgbastonia Directory, 1908.

(23) There was no record of the precise class background of the inmates in the Annual Reports but census returns recorded them all as domestic servants.

(24) Census returns, 1891. Like the young women from the Magdalen Asylum, the inmates of the Home were generally from the local area of Birmingham and the Midlands. (Census returns, 1891.) There were a few cases from Lancashire, (LACFG Annual Report, 1907, p10.) a case from London and a case from Rhyl but these were rare. (Census returns, 1891.)

(25) This ideal was not always adhered to: in 1893 'older and depraved' cases were admitted which was seen to harm the delicate relationship between the other inmates and the Home. For several months in 1893 and 1894 the LACFG Committee made a concerted effort, with the magistrates help, to return to the rescue and reform of first time offenders. This incident is a further indication of the similarities between the beliefs of the Magdalen Asylum's Committee and that of the LACFG. (LACFG Annual Reports, 1893-1894.)

(26) Showell's Dictionary of Birmingham, 1885, p217.

(27) LACFG Annual Report, 1895.

(28) Edgbastonia Directory, 1907.

(29) It was believed that police court visiting was peculiar to Birmingham. (Mrs Bishop, in A Burdett-Coutts, Woman's Mission, Samson Low, Marston and Company, 1893, p389.) Six women, three or four of whom were Quakers, visited the police courts each morning

on a rota basis. (The Friend, sixth month, 1890, p170.) This visiting may reflect the commitment of these women to the social gospel.

(30) But so too were the rescue workers. Mrs Rogers selected her workers carefully to make sure that, they too, met exacting standards. Mrs Rogers was very careful in the choice of ladies for rescue work - those who might gossip or interfere were rejected as were those deemed too excitable:

> Not everyone was fitted for this work; it was not suited to the young. Those of a nervous and excitable temperament would do more harm than good, and come into collision with the authorities. (The Friend, sixth month, 1890, p168.)

> We have always been very careful in the choice of ladies for this work selecting judicious ones, who would not gossip or interfere. (Vigilance Record, June 15th 1887, p37.)

(31) Vigilance Record, June 15th, 1887.

(32) Edgbastonia, November-December, 1889.

(33) Edith Sellars, in A Burdett-Coutts, Woman's Mission, 1893, p48.

(34) The choice between prison and the Home may not have been fully appreciated by all those released into the care of the LACFG. Reformed prostitutes were certainly sentenced to a longer term in the Home than in prison. For example, most prostitutes in 1899 and 1900 who were convicted of either soliciting or keeping brothels were fined, on average, between 5/- and 20/- with the alternative of going to prison for between five days and a month. Only one defendant was sent to the Home in 1899, according to the records. (Register of the Court of Summary Jurisdiction sitting at the Police Court, Victoria Courts, November 28th, 1899-May 24th 1900.) However, women may have been sent to the Home before trial but there is no evidence to substantiate this either way.

(35) See L Mahood, The Magdalenes, Routledge, 1990, pp120-136 for a discussion of the relationship between charity workers and police in Glasgow.

(36) Elizabeth Cadbury, The Friend, sixth month, 1890, p169.

(37) As an offshoot of rescue work, conditions in the police cells were improved. Largely through the efforts of the LACFG, women officers were appointed to look after prisoners:

> Attention was directed to the new and satisfactory arrangements made in the lock-up by the Watch Committee and the Chief Constable. There were now three Matrons for the 24 hours who took day and night duties in rotation so that the female prisoners, who were often taken to the

courts in deplorable condition, might always have a woman's care and administration. (Birmingham Daily Post, February 22nd, 1902, p11.)

(38) Hopkins may have been motivated to change the methods of reform work because asylums and penitentiaries had a low success rate. Attempts, she argued, were undermined because young women refused to stay in such miserable institutions. (E Hopkins, Notes on Penitentiary Work, 1879, pp1-4.)

(39) E Hopkins, Notes on Penitentiary Work, 1879, p10.

(40) Birmingham Daily Post, February 28th, 1914.

(41) See Chart 5 at the end of the footnotes for further detail.

(42) Birmingham Daily Post, March 6th, 1908, p4.

(43) LACFG Annual Reports, 1891-1914.

(44) Birmingham Daily Post, February 11th 1905, p6.

(45) Birmingham Daily Post, February 24th, 1912, p6.

(46) See R Kunzel, Fallen Women, Problem Girls, 1993, p29 for a discussion of this in relation to American reformatories.

(47) Once admitted to Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home, inmates were expected to stay for two years - the same as the Magdalen Asylum.

(48) When women entered the Home they were provided with clothing, free of charge. There was no indication that this was a uniform.

(49) Birmingham Daily Post, February 13th, 1904, p3.

(50) LACFG Annual Report, 1891.

(51) LACFG Annual Report, 1902, p8.

(52) E Hopkins, Notes on Penitentiary Work, 1879, p20.

(53) Technological improvements were made throughout this period in order to make the laundry more efficient and to ease the physical labour of the young women. These improvements, as in the Asylum, may have been more to do with new legislation than concern for the inmates. As a consequence of the 1907 Factory Act, improvements were made to the laundry and electrical machinery installed to save the young women from excessively hard work. (LACFG Annual Report, 1908, p11.) These improvements were said to have met with the approval of the Lady Factory Inspector. However, the inspectors' report was condemnatory of charitable laundries in general. (Chief Inspectors Report of Factories and Workshops, 1907, pp203-204.)

(54) The women who managed Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home were obviously unaffected by the earlier work of Jessie Boucherett who had founded the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women, despite their commitment to suffrage and social purity politics. (J Rendall, "'A Moral Engine'? Feminism, Liberalism and the 'English Woman's Journal'", in J Rendall Equal or Different, Basil Blackwell, 1987, pp124-5.)

(55) Many of the charitable workers at the Home were married to manufacturers. (See Chapter Two for further details.) One might assume therefore that the Committee wanted the Home to be self-supporting rather than a burden on middle class subscribers.

(56) Prior to 1899 laundry receipts generally amounted to much less than this. In 1899 the Home was managed by a particularly successful Matron which may account for the higher income after this date.

(57) The LACFG had a larger subscription list than the Magdalen Asylum and raised money fairly easily from its wealthy supporters. The Home had capital invested in Birmingham Corporation Stock and from some considerable bequests - in 1903 the Home received £1,000 from Thomas Best - from which they drew interest. (LACFG Annual Report, 1903.)

(58) The annual income of the Home ranged between £600-£900. Salaries were in the region of £100. (LACFG Annual Reports, 1891-1914.)

(59) Deficits usually occurred because of capital expenditure on building works, redecoration or the purchase of heavy machinery. (LACFG Annual Reports, 1878-1914.)

(60) Long hours were the norm for laundry workers as demonstrated in Chapter Three.

(61) LACFG Annual Report, 1902, p8.

(62) In 1892 a Recreation Committee was formed which consisted of ten members of the LACFG. (LACFG Annual Report, 1892.)

(63) LACFG Annual Report, 1895, p15.

(64) LACFG Annual Report, 1901, p8.

(65) E Hopkins, Notes on Penitentiary Work, 1876, p24.

(66) LACFG Annual Report, 1894, p15.

(67) LACFG Annual Report, 1892, p17.

(68) LACFG Annual Report, 1893, p15.

(69) LACFG Annual Reports, 1901-1914.

(70) LACFG Annual Reports, 1891-1914.

(71) Presents such as writing cases were sometimes given by the hostess of these events.

(72) Birmingham Daily Post, March 6th, 1908, p4.

(73) LACFG Annual Report, 1906, p10.

(74) LACFG Annual Reports, 1891-1914.

(75) LACFG Annual Reports, 1891-1914.

(76) Several small gifts were often distributed at these parties.

(77) LACFG Annual Report, 1894, p14.

(78) LACFG Annual Report, 1895, p14.

(79) LACFG Annual Report, 1894, p14.

(80) In 1994 over 100 Philippino women employed as domestics in Hong Kong congregated by the shore each Sunday - their only day off - because they had nowhere else to go. They were not allowed to or had no wish to remain in the home of their employer.

(81) LACFG Annual Report, 1906, p10. However, there may have been other responses not reported.

(82) See Chart 5 for a further breakdown.

(83) Two inmates were dismissed in 1896 and one in 1897. (LACFG Annual Reports, 1890-1914)

(84) Birmingham Gazette, February 18th, 1893.

(85) In 1891 the Matron was Harriet Hall, aged 39. Her two assistants, Amelia Blakemore, aged 32, and Eliza Humphrey, aged 29 were not that much older than the average inmate in her early twenties. (Census returns, 1891.)

(86) LACFG Annual Report, 1892, p10.

(87) Birmingham Daily Post, February 10th, 1894, p4.

(88) Birmingham Daily Post, February 24th, 1912, p7.

(89) Perhaps, more importantly, the finances of the Home also improved. Laundry receipts rose from £3 10s to £10 per head as a result of the efficiency of Sister Mary. Laundry receipts became an increasingly important part of the annual income.

(90) Birmingham Daily Post, February 2nd, 1901.

(91) Birmingham Daily Post, February 27th, 1909, p13.

(92) Birmingham Daily Post, February 24th, 1912, p7. When Sister Mary died in 1911 the organisers praised her self sacrifice, generosity and kindness, believing her to have set a good example to the inmates. This fulsome praise may have been conventional on death but there was no record of any other Superintendent receiving such a eulogy:

> ...it was the joy of her sweet nature to lose herself absolutely in the trials and troubles of those who from time to time came under her care. Not even the most hardened girl could live with her without being touched by such gentle influence, and helped to better things. Sister Mary was singularly fitted for this difficult work, as she had the necessary and rarely combined qualities of firmness and tenderness with Christ like patience. Never had such lasting good been done in our Home, for she had the power of civilising and raising the girls by her very personality.(LACFG Annual Report, 1911, p9.)

(93) LACFG Annual Report, 1910, p10.

(94) See Chart 5 for a detailed breakdown.

(95) Birmingham Daily Post, February 28th, 1914.

(96) It was common for women Poor Law Guardians to emigrate children to the colonies. See Hollis, Ladies Elect, Clarendon, 1987, pp257-258. Unemployed single women were also encouraged to emigrate. See J Hammerton, Emigrant Gentlewomen: Genteel Poverty and Female Emigration, 1830-1919, Croom Helm, 1979.

(97) LACFG Annual Report, 1912, p9.

(98) LACFG Annual Report, 1911, p9.

(99) LACFG Annual Reports, 1891-1914.

Inmates of Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	LACFG							
2								
3	DATES	NOS AV	NOS APP	ABSC	LEFT	FRIENDS	DISMISS	SERVICE
4								
5	1891	23	36	0	4	2	2	8
6	1892	22	24		11			
7	1893	14	70	3	1	0	0	3
8	1894	22		4	4	0	0	5
9	1897	19	30	6	6	0	0	10
10	1898	18	40	0	3	0	0	7
11	1899	22	52	3	8	0	0	7
12	1900	22		0	8	0	0	12
13	1901	21		0	3	0	0	8
14	1902	28		2	4	0	0	8
15	1903	23	74	5	7	0	0	9
16	1904	24		0	7	0	0	8
17	1906	23		0	4	0	0	14
18	1907	23		0	7	0	0	11
19	1908	23		0	3	0	0	11
20	1909	18		0	4	0	0	10
21	1910	25		0	2	0	0	12
22	1911			0	3	0	0	10
23	1912	14		0	2	0	0	12
24	1913	23		0	3	0	0	12

Nos Av = average numbers in the Home in any one year
Nos App = average numbers who applied to the Home
Absc = number of inmates who ran away
Left = number of inmates who left of their own accord
To Friends = number of inmates who left to return to friends or family
Dismissed = number of inmates who were dismissed
Service = number of inmates who found jobs as a domestic servant

Compiled from Ladies Association for the Care of Friendless Girls Annual Reports

Chart Five

PART FOUR: PREVENTING PROSTITUTION

Introduction

Reforming women promised only one of a number of solutions to the problem of prostitution. By the 1880s, prevention was considered better than cure. In an attempt to prevent immoral behaviour, a similar group of Birmingham Nonconformists to that of the LACFG mounted an attack on what was perceived to be the causes of prostitution and 'sexual incontinence'. A mixed gender organisation, the Birmingham and Midland Counties' Vigilance Association (BMCVA) and three all women groups, the Birmingham Ladies' Association for the Care and Protection of Young Girls (BLACPYG), Agatha Stacey Homes (ASH) and the Girls' Night Shelter (GNS) were all founded to achieve these aims.[1]

This section will analyse the seemingly symbiotic, sometimes complementary and sometimes conflicting, relationship between gender and class with reference to the development of preventive work. It will reinforce the argument of the previous chapters that one cannot regard these categories as homogeneous: class, for example was gendered and gender was constructed within a class setting. Both these categories - alongside race and age - worked in a complex mixture shaping and modifying the process of moral reform in Birmingham. Consequently, these categories will be integrated into an historical narrative of preventive work.

At first there might seem to be little difference between the

mixed gender and the all female organisations which might make the question of gender composition seem irrelevant and the importance of gender insignificant. Most of the people involved in each of these groups will be shown to be middle class, of Liberal political persuasion, Nonconformist and supportive of the women's suffrage movement.[2] This shared class background combined with shared political and religious beliefs, it will be argued, helped create a similar ideological frame-work, regardless of the gender make-up of the organisation.

However, the ideological frame-work of the groups, it will be claimed, was shaped by gender. For example, both the BMCVA and the BLACPYG challenged the concept of the double standard of morality, whereby different moral behaviour was expected of men and women, in favour of a single standard. This might suggest that the sexual behaviour of men and women was viewed in a similar way: there was no difference between the genders. This challenge, however, was set within the context of orthodox gender assumptions. As guardians of the home, women were expected to promulgate and uphold strict moral values and were blamed when they failed to do so. Women, much more than men, were held responsible for the establishment and delivery of moral standards. In addition, it will be shown that all the organisations approved of an essence of womanhood which embodied the characteristics of passivity and subservience. Women's natural place cut across the class divide. It was firmly located in the home - either their own or someone else's - which women left at their peril. All the organisations subscribed to the

'slippery slope'[3] theory whereby women who engaged in premarital sex, who produced illegitimate children, who were considered wayward and troublesome, who were homeless and without friends or who were 'feeble-minded' were in danger of becoming prostitutes.

Each of these organisations, it will be demonstrated, held assumptions that were based upon a shared middle class and gendered perspective. All subscribed to a middle class definition of the 'deserving', as opposed to the 'undeserving' poor and shared a concern that state help to the poor was costly and should be pegged at a low level. Charity was viewed as a better substitute to state aid because it was both more discriminating and less expensive. It helped only those who were deemed worthy, not the improvident or the degenerate. The categories of 'deserving', it will be shown, were gendered. 'Deserving' women were either innocents in danger or victims who had been abused. On the other hand, the 'undeserving' - whether male or female - threatened the moral health of the nation.

Both gender and class, it will be demonstrated, were shaped by 'race'. It was feared, particularly by ASH, that the fine old British middle class stock would be swamped by working class imbeciles who bred at an alarming rate and might undermine the Empire. 'Feeble-mindedness', was associated with both working class and female characteristics. Unemployment, insobriety, improvidence and poverty were among the distinguishing marks of mental weakness. Sexual incontinence, it was alleged, was an

added characteristic of 'feeble minded' women.

The evidence above might suggest that, although each group worked within the parameters of a gendered ideology, it made little difference whether an organisation was predominantly male or female. In practice, it will be asserted, there was greater divergence. First of all women's organisations appear to have been more practically based than the men's. Women set up Homes and Shelters which in the event outlived the organisations which founded them. On the other hand, the BMCVA pursued an interventionist stance with regard to the development of social policy and campaigned for legal change more systematically than the all female organisations.

Secondly, the women's organisations will be shown to have used the state apparatus less forcefully than the BMCVA. Women supported increased state intervention and appeared confident that the legal system could dictate moral behaviour but used it less in their daily affairs. Only fathers who had reneged on child welfare payments were taken to court. On the other hand, the BMCVA advocated and practised an aggressive prosecution policy whereby men and women were policed, taken to court and ultimately sentenced.

Finally, the all women organisations will be shown to be more sympathetic than the BMCVA to women who defied orthodox gender behaviour. Women were less vindictive towards those who continued in prostitution than the latter. Instead they sought to tackle

the problem by providing shelter and support to those in potential danger. On the other hand, the BMCVA endorsed a policy and practice which made the working prostitute more powerless. Brothels were closed down and women were left homeless in the BMCVA's campaign to eradicate vice.

The similarities and differences between these groups will be examined in the following section. Because each organisation has dealt with a different section of the female population a schematic approach has been adopted. First there will be an analysis of the BMCVA, followed by the BLACPYG, ASH and lastly the GNS. What is striking about the various organisations, however, is the similarities between their ideologies.

Notes and References

(1) Mr Rogers became President of the GNS in 1908 after the death of his wife, its former President but this was only an honorary post. In the first couple of years ASH allowed men to become Committee members but they quickly reverted to an all female membership. The BLACPYG was all women throughout.

(2) See Chapter Two for a discussion of this.

(3) It was not called a theory at the time but social purity workers often referred to the 'slippery slope' metaphor. R Kunzel has noted similar trends in the American system. See R Kunzel, Fallen Women, Problem Girls, Yale University Press, 1993.

Chapter Five: The Birmingham and Midland Counties' Vigilance Association

In 1885 a Criminal Law Amendment Act (CLAA) was passed which raised the age of sexual consent to 16, gave police greater powers to close down brothels and made male homosexuality illegal.[1] In order to help enforce the CLAA, the National Vigilance Association (NVA) was formed in the same year.[2] Birmingham founded its own branch: the Birmingham and Midland Counties' Vigilance Association (BMCVA). It emerged from the Midland Counties' Electoral Union for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts Relating to Women.[3] The BMCVA was inaugurated at a public meeting held on December 9th 1886.[4] Until 1894, when it amalgamated with the NVA, the BMCVA acted as an autonomous and independent body which was only loosely affiliated to its parent organisation.[5] By 1904 the BMCVA was defunct.[6]

Between 1885-1904 the BMCVA sought to question, challenge, curtail and change male sexual behaviour as well as women's. Like the NVA it was a complex mixture of repression, protection, and liberation.[7] Given the predominantly male composition of the BMCVA[8] and its target audience one might expect a different ideological framework from that of the all female organisations. This was not so. To a great extent, the BMCVA was part of a three pronged attack by middle class Birmingham Nonconformists to stop prostitution and curb immorality,[9] and mirrored the philosophy of the LACFG and the BLACPYG. This suggests that the gender composition of an organisation was perhaps less significant in

framing moral philosophy than previously supposed but it is perhaps impossible to separate cause and effect here.

Gender, however, played a crucial role in other respects. This section offers another perspective on the inter-relationships and tensions between gender and class. The central thrust will be to examine the gender and class assumptions underpinning the theory and practice of the BMCVA and will chart the ways in which gender and class both conflicted, and complemented, each other. First of all the ideological framework of the BMCVA will be discussed. This will be followed by an analysis of the ways in which this theory was put into practice, specifically in the areas of educational, office (which meant case) and legal work.

Radical feminist historians[10] have suggested that social purity groups such as the NVA were influenced by feminism. It is argued that, largely because of this influence, social purity groups challenged the double standard of Victorian England in favour of a single standard of morality for both sexes. However, the single moral standard, aimed for by social purity workers, is problematic but no historian, to date, has provided a critique of this. An examination of one of the most articulated ideas of the BMCVA - the single standard - provides a good example of how their beliefs about appropriate gender behaviour were both concordant and conflicting.

Initially, the BMCVA's critique of the double standard appeared

to undermine traditional gender and class behavioural expectations but on closer inspection it merely reinforced them in a new way. The BMCVA challenged the often-held distinction between private and public morality with its concomitant emphasis on the double standard. It has been suggested that the division between the public and private spheres was at the heart of morality and the basis of the double standard. Virtue, it is argued, was seen as residing in the private world of the home whereas vice was present in the public arena of the streets.[11] As a consequence of this division, women (as guardians of the home) were expected to be chaste whereas men (who worked in the public sphere) were not. In the same way as the all women groups and the NVA, the BMCVA criticised the double standard and denounced the idea that purity was deemed the "essential grace of womanhood" whilst impurity was the privilege of man.[12] The BMCVA abhorred the moral distinction made between men and women who transgressed the sexual code. In addition, it expressed concern that women alone were blamed for sexual misconduct while men were let off. The following extract epitomises its radical politics:

> It often troubled her greatly, at the Police Court, that these girls, some of whom had not been the temptresses, should be called to account, while men, who were the tempters, were not subject at all to the action of the police.[13]

As a result of these beliefs, the BMCVA advocated - but it will transpire did not practise - a gender neutral morality, espoused a single standard of sexual conduct and argued that both men and women should adhere to strict moral conventions:

> <the BMCVA>...marks a great step in national progress

> towards the perception and adoption of an equal standard of morals for the two sexes...the object of the new Association will be to encourage the development of this idea, by helping and educating local expression of indignation against the organised debasement of women.[14]

However, the BMCVA also adopted a class perspective with regard to moral issues. In particular they were worried that men in high public office escaped moral censure. Concern was expressed that the most respectable men in society were often the ones who offended against the moral code for "they knew that in their Edgbaston churches there were men attending who were terribly to blame in the matter."[15] Men in positions of power, the BMCVA believed, should be expected to be paragons of virtue in order to set a good example to the rest of society:

> I wish, that the higher classes of society treated this matter as it ought to do. Men of loose morals should be banished from all good society. In the past their evil deeds have been very much condoned. I cannot see why a man who infringes God's law in this way should not be treated as you would treat a man who commits some other crime.[16]

Furthermore, the BMCVA consistently upheld the view that if moral principles were transgressed then punishment must be meted out to male and female alike whether they were working or middle class. For instance, men who sought to buy sexual favours should be punished, as nearly as possible, in the same way as women who sold them.[17]

Contemporaneously, the gender assumptions which lay behind the rejection of the double standard were less radical than outlined above. In conducting the debate within the parameters of gender,

the BMCVA reflected a deep ambivalence over this issue. It was women, rather than men, who were believed to be debased by immorality.[18] This suggests that the BMCVA, like the LACFG before it, tended to view women as victims, and men as perpetrators, of immorality. Consequently, there were inconsistencies in the way in which men and women were handled if they broke the moral code: the treatment meted out differed by gender. Women needed protection and should be cared for whereas men needed restraint and should be dealt with more harshly. Men, it was believed, should not be allowed to shelter behind their private and closed domestic doors but should be punished for sexual incontinence. Personal privacy was considered to be less important than public morality. Time after time reports about Birmingham in the Vigilance Record and the BMCVA Annual Reports stressed the need to exclude those men from municipal or Parliamentary office who had a moral stain on their character. The BMCVA also wished to exclude immoral men from the homes and social circles they frequented:

> I would remorselessly exclude from all honourable office, either municipal or parliamentary, any man with any taint whatever upon his moral life...until you make it impossible for a man whose reputation has been sullied, to seek as a candidate for any honour whatever in public life, we shall have to fight with this vice continuously and for ever.[19]

On the other hand, women seemed to be treated with greater leniency - if they repented. Charity, rather than social ostracism, was offered to women who fell by the sexual wayside:

> We cannot turn such cases away; they must be helped by someone, or go from bad to worse;...So long as pity,

> charity, a helping hand, and the inspiration of hope are refused these victims of the betrayers' acts, so long will our streets offer a market for prostitution, and so long will there be a need for rescue work.[20]

The next extract epitomises the gender and class attitudes of the BMCVA. The assumptions, both explicit and implicit, reflect the notions of women as victims and men as hunters, of women as passive and men as aggressive and of women as subservient and men as in command. It portrays a poor, extremely young innocent victim who has been preyed upon by older, more worldly wise married, richer men, plied with drink and seduced. Step by slow step the unwilling, unsuspecting and gullible young woman was deflowered by a disreputable character.[21] Punishment swiftly followed for the male offender while the blameless casualty was offered protection:

> L aged sixteen was employed in a small manufactory in Birmingham. B aged 25 (a married man and son of L's employer) with the assistance of C, a young woman engaged in the same business, gained L's consent to go with them to a place of public amusement. Finding that C was accompanied by a young man, L was induced to accept the companionship of B. Instead, however, of proceeding to the proposed place of amusement, they walked about until after midnight. L became alarmed and begged C to go home with her and make it right with her parents; to which C replied 'You cannot go home now, it's too late; I am going to sleep at a friend's house; come with me and I will take you home early in the morning.' Unfortunately, L who had for some time previously been a total abstainer, accepted the proferred intoxicants, and thus became an easy prey to the seducer. The house of C's friend proved to be a disreputable lodging house, and there B committed a criminal offence on L.[22] A summons was duly served upon him, to which he did not appear. Thereupon a warrant was issued, and he speedily fled the country. Meantime, with the consent of the distressed parents, L was taken under the care of the Birmingham Ladies Association for the Care and Protection of Young Girls; was placed in their training home, and is now duly qualified for domestic service.[23]

Social purity, therefore, was not only gendered but influenced by class. At first it appeared that the establishment of a sound moral base cut, unequivocally, across class boundaries. In establishing a moral code which encompassed all classes, the BMCVA could be seen not only to erode class barriers but to forge links across them. The rhetoric of a uniform chastity however obscured the hierarchical nature of the BMCVA's enterprise. Moral reform never was, and was never meant to be, a relationship of equals. The BMCVA may have wanted one sexual moral standard for all classes but it was a standard decided by the middle class. In effect it was ultimately coercive because the BMCVA imposed its own sexual ethos of sexual abstinence before marriage and faithfulness within it upon others.

Gender and class assumptions were equally contradictory in the practice of the BMCVA. Educational policies underpinned action. Public and private venues were utilised for sermons, lectures and discussions in order to promote the ideals of social purity. Mass meetings, conferences and churches were employed by the BMCVA to put across its moral message. Church leaders were encouraged to preach sermons about social purity in their churches, chapels and halls.[24] These meetings were sexually and/or socially selective. Drawing Room meetings, for example, catered for a different clientele then Mothers' Meetings or men only meetings. All were led by middle class people who tried to imbue audiences with a middle class definition of morality. Nonetheless, the common tie that bound these groups together was based on a similar message

of chastity, purity and sexual abstinence before marriage.

The cornerstone of the BMCVA's educational policy was the family. Moral values, it was argued, came directly from the parents and not just from the society in which they lived. Parents were therefore encouraged to create a positive moral frame-work within the home.

> If parents would teach their children the lesson of obedience and rebuke them for words and actions which are wrong and impure, and keep them away from association with evil companions, it would do more than all the law can accomplish in the way of removing this blot from society.[25]

The upshot of equating home with morality and home with women meant that women were inextricably linked to the moral code. There was an implicit acceptance that moral values were embedded in the private sphere of the family. The word 'parents' slipped imperceptibly into a new meaning: women. Because women were the formative influence on young children, they were responsible for inculcating morality. The transference of moral values therefore became women's preserve.[26] Consequently, women bore a disproportionate share of the blame when they failed to impress the appropriate values on to their children.[27] Even the hiring and firing of suitable domestic staff was seen to be women's responsibility, not men's:

> They must see to it that the nurse to whom they entrust their children is not only of sound moral character, but also of a pure and healthy mind...She was astonished to find how often children were committed to the care of girls who were most unfit to have charge of them.[28]

Educational policies such as those outlined above supported the BMCVA's office work. In many respects, office (case) work was even more gendered than education. For instance, women - not men - were targeted. There was no evidence that men used the facilities offered by the BMCVA. In many ways the BMCVA duplicated the work of the BLACPYG.[29] It helped trace missing persons, helped women break away from immoral surroundings, dealt with cases of broken promises of marriage, advised on the suitability of domestic situations for servants and helped collect maintenance for single mothers and their children.[30] Occasionally, the BMCVA acted as mediator between parents and single parent daughters.

> Office work covers a wide range and partakes of the nature of romance and tragedy. A broken-hearted mother calls to seek our assistance in tracing the whereabouts of her daughter...An inquiry comes by post as to the advisability of a young girl from the country accepting a situation in Birmingham...a grief-stricken mother and father come to relieve a bleeding heart and to seek our advice and help on behalf of a daughter who has been betrayed, and then abandoned...The betrayer is traced. He is compelled to offer acceptable terms for the support of the child, or an order is obtained from the magistrate.[31]

Women were also treated as minors whereas men were regarded as adults. This, of course, may have been a reflection of differences in age as much as gender. Nonetheless, parents of young women were held responsible for their erring daughters whereas parents of sons were not - in this regard, at least. Furthermore, when the BMCVA helped young women with illegitimate children they negotiated with their parents rather than with the mother. In contrast, the parents of the man who had fathered the

child were never contacted. Instead the putative father was encouraged to pay maintenance and - unlike the mother - held responsible for his own actions:[32]

> We welcome the day when the man shall be compelled by the Legislature to bear his full weight of the responsibility, and when he shall be made to feel that he cannot work this far-reaching havoc with impunity.[33]

Women, perhaps because they were viewed as less than adults, were seen to be in need of protection. Protection extended to women in all aspects of life from those in search of work as well as single mothers. Concern was often expressed that young women were placed in vulnerable situations in their working environments.[34] In particular, domestic service placed young women at the mercy of their employers. To alleviate this problem the BMCVA checked out domestic situations, named the respectable registry offices where reputable domestic servants were engaged and asked the BLACPYG to oversee young women who sought work in Birmingham.[35] Employers of male domestic servants were never vetted presumably because young women were more likely to be sexually harassed than young men.[36]

The legal actions of the BMCVA, namely the prosecution of those who published indecent literature, who abused children and were engaged in prostitution, reflect a similarly curious blend of repression and protection which raises further ambiguities about gender and class. As Bland[37] has pointed out this was in line with the policies of the NVA. The BMCVA was criticised at the time as a prudish organisation but it was an accusation of which

the BMCVA was proud:

> Another duty was to rigorously carry out the law against the transgressors, so as to protect girls from the evils and temptations that surrounded them. No doubt they would be called prudish and sentimental by some, but it would not hurt them, neither did they care for their gibes.[38]

The BMCVA advocated an approach which on the surface was politically radical but was also coloured by gender and class bias. Obscene literature and indecent advertising were linked, in the BMCVA's mind, with moral turpitude. Exposure to such literature, it was believed, encouraged sexual incontinence and augmented the pervasive corruption of the day because it created the climate in which immorality thrived.[39] Indecent advertisements, for example, were blamed for inciting immoral thoughts in the minds of the impressionable young which in turn led to immoral actions. There was decisive proof, according to the BMCVA, that immoral literature and advertising encouraged licentious behaviour. In the minds of the BMCVA's Committee, a definite link was established between language and action: indecent literature fostered indecent behaviour. Words, as well as deeds, the BMCVA believed, undermined morality.[40] Its advocacy of a robust prosecution policy was based on the damage that such literature posed to the general public. This reductionist approach whereby indecent literature directly contributed to immorality was never questioned. It was considered inappropriate for anybody, not just the vulnerable, to see and read it. Indecent literature, it was believed, should be banned outright.[41] There was never any debate about the freedom and

rights of citizens to determine their own sexuality or to choose as freely consenting adults.[42] The following quote illustrates the BMCVA's fear that immoral literature led to the moral corruption of the young:

> If we would send down to posterity a nobler and a purer generation of men and women it will not be merely educating the young on moral questions, important though they may be, but also by attacking with a strong and vigorous arm the foe who would wither with his blast the nation's promise and hope of the future...Not the least serious aspect of this question of indecent advertisements is that they often offer the first lesson in immorality to the budding minds of the observant and inquiring...we look to the law for at least a measure of its protection in the interests of the young.[43]

In addition, there was an agreed definition, never publicly stated, about what constituted indecent literature. In being gender neutral, the BMCVA was gender blind. The BMCVA never referred to the fact that much indecent literature may have debased women. No distinction was ever made between pornography and informative sexual literature. It was all condemned as highly indecent.[44] Any public portrayal of sexuality was deemed to be degrading to humanity. Educational leaflets, erotica and pornography were all equally condemned and ultimately censored.[45]

Class power exercised through the legal system was used to implement the BMCVA's ideas. The BMCVA operated at what is sometimes perceived as a transitional moment in British politics when liberal individualism was being replaced by a more collectivist culture.[46] The BMCVA marked a critical shift away from private philanthropy based on individual solutions to one which favoured an official collectivist paradigm. This was

characterised by the BMCVA's willingness to use the emerging interventionist - and middle class - state to regulate the private behaviour of its citizens. In the same way as the NVA,[47] the BMCVA viewed the criminal law as an agency of protection as well as repression. The BMCVA saw the state as an agency of change in that governments could - as in the Poor Law of 1834 - legislate to alter the moral behaviour of its citizens.[48] Certainly the activities of the BMCVA reflected this new interventionist spirit because it used the regulatory powers of the state to institute proceedings against those who offended their particular middle class moral code. This may have been because men identified with, and were more willing to use, the state apparatus than women - but there is no proof of this in the records.[49] A better explanation may be that because Birmingham Nonconformists held political power in the city, they were more able to use the state apparatus at their disposal.

Mort[50] has also pointed out that there was greater co-operation in Nonconformist areas than Anglican ones between the NVA and the police. This was certainly true of Birmingham. The BMCVA enjoyed good relationships with the magistrates and the police which reinforces the claim above:

> I desire to embrace this opportunity of saying that I know...the assistance this Association has received from the police. In fact, we should not have accomplished many of the things that we have, had it not been for that assistance; and I do not think there are many men in the country more in sympathy with purity and with the objects of this Association than Mr Farndale, the Chief of Police. The records of the police are always open to the Secretary of this Association, and the assistance of the police,

when asked for, has always been readily given.[51]

The Chief of Police was not the only official sympathetic to social purity. The Chair of the Watch Committee, C T Bishop, and one stipendiary magistrate were members of the BMCVA and many others were sympathetic to its aims, according to reports in the social purity press.[52] Nonetheless, the BMCVA did not escape public censure. The Town Crier, for example, pilloried the zeal with which the BMCVA sought to reform public morals by banning 'promiscuous' parties and balls:

> If they want the support of the general public - they must leave off twiddle twaddle...Does the worthy chairman wish boys to associate only with boys, and girls only with girls. Imagine a dance where only girls were present, they would not have a really jolly time. This is not the way to put an end to immorality.[53]

Despite this criticism, the BMCVA successfully prosecuted men who produced and sold improper prints,[54] made immodest speeches,[55] posted indecent advertisements,[56] or sold objectionable Christmas cards.[57]

> The Association was keeping a strict eye upon one form of evil, which took the form of the sale of indecent literature and pictures, and when they came across a clear case would deal with it severely.[58]

The BMCVA also investigated incidents in Board Schools. On one occasion indecent cards circulated by a Board School boy were destroyed after an investigation.[59]

Child abuse generated a similar sense of moral outrage. Class - and gender - power was used to prosecute those who sexually

abused children.[60] Radical feminist historians[61] have suggested that the prosecution of, and campaigns against, child sexual abuse broke the conspiracy of silence and protected young women from aggressive male behaviour. This proactive policy, they claim, raised general questions about the abuse of male power. Initiatives around child sexual abuse were therefore welcomed. Unfortunately, the Birmingham prosecutions of child abusers were not so clear cut as suggested above. To a large extent the BMCVA wielded a doubled edged moral sword in the fight against sexual impurity. On the one hand, it sought to defend young girls from sexual abuse and espoused a sexual politics based upon protection. The BMCVA was willing to use the law against the perpetrators of such crimes. It is in such instances that gender and class appear to be more harmonious categories than antagonistic ones as class power was utilised in support of gender politics. The coercive mechanisms of the state were targeted at the protection of the weak: women and young children. Great concern was expressed that young girls were being sexually assaulted by male adults. Cases were reported of abuse ranging from indecent exposure to what today is termed rape. Offenders were prosecuted:

> the case of indecent behaviour to little girls, which was heard at the Aston Police Court, yesterday, and which resulted in the prisoner, JOHN HAMMERSLEY, being sentenced to two months imprisonment with hard labour, without the option of a fine, was of considerable importance. These degrading and disgusting offences are becoming increasingly common...It has evidently become the practice of a certain class of persons, whom a brutal lust has deprived of all sense of decency and manliness, to entice little children into a public park and to attempt by promises or threats to induce them to submit to outrage.[62]

The above extract appears to be a clear cut case whereby class and gender power (the law)[63] was exercised in support of class and gender politics (protecting working class women) and supports the ideas of Jackson[64] and Jeffreys.[65] However there are a number of weaknesses in viewing gender and class politics as harmonious. Firstly the BMCVA was motivated by a repressive ideology - rather than a gendered one - to prosecute offenders. No distinction was made between under-age sex and that between adult consenting partners. All sexual activities outside the conventional framework of marriage were considered to be unacceptable behaviour.

Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, men who abused young girls were not the only ones who were punished. There were times when young women were penalised for the crimes someone else had committed. Sometimes young women were sent away from their families to a Home[66] and at others, children were advised not to play in the playgrounds or the streets. Children were thus punished by being denied access to public areas because of the fear of abuse. At no time was it suggested that a curfew be extended to men walking alone in these areas.

The BMCVA, however, was not always immediately successful in obtaining a conviction or a lengthy sentence. Despite the efforts of the BMCVA many men remained unconvicted and young girls left unprotected:

> In April last an intimation was made to us...that a man

> (Ollerenshaw) in that parish had been guilty of an indecent assault upon a little girl of 7 years of age; and that there was evidence of assault upon other little girls...he had escaped on a former occasion through the evidence not being properly worked up ... and on July 28th was sentenced to six months imprisonment.[67]

Two years later, Ollerenshaw was still abusing children. He was found guilty again in 1894 for abusing a girl of 8 years old and sentenced to 18 months imprisonment with hard labour.[68] As the following compilation from the Calendar of Prisoners tried at the Autumn Assizes demonstrates, many other men were discharged or else served a light sentence:

1	CHILD ABUSE AND INDECENT ASSAULT		
2			
3	DATES	CONVICTION	
4			
5	MARCH 1892	12 MONTHS	
6	APRIL 1892	12 MONTHS	
7	APRIL 1892	6 MONTHS	
8	JUNE 1892	ACQUITTED	
9	OCTOBER 1892	18 MONTHS	
10	APRIL 1894	2 YEARS	
11	APRIL 1894	PRISONER ABS	
12	JANUARY 1895	12 MONTHS	
13	APRIL 1895	DISCHARGED	
14	APRIL 1896	12 MONTHS	
15	APRIL 1896	12 MONTHS	
16	JANUARY 1897	9 MONTHS	
17	JANUARY 1897	15 MONTHS	
18	OCTOBER 1897	DISCHARGED	
19	OCTOBER 1897	DISCHARGED	
20	OCTOBER 1897	12 MONTHS	
21	OCTOBER 1897	9 MONTHS	
22	MAY 1898	12 MONTHS	
23	JUNE 1898	DISCHARGED	
24	JANUARY 1899	2 YEARS	
25	DECEMBER 1899	18 MONTHS	
26	DECEMBER 1899	7 YEARS	
27	DECEMBER 1899	3 YEARS	
28	JULY 1901	DISCHARGED	
29	JULY 1901	DISCHARGED	
30	DECEMBER 1901	6 MONTHS	
31	FEBRUARY 1902	12 MONTHS	
32	APRIL 1902	DISCHARGED	
33	MARCH 1903	DISCHARGED	
34	JULY 1903	10 YEARS	
35	OCTOBER 1903	£10 FINE	
36	OCTOBER 1903	NO TRUE BILL	

Compiled from Calendar of Prisoners tried at the Autumn Assizes 1892-1904

This failure to convict and to obtain long sentences, of course, was not the fault of the BMCVA. In many respects it could be indicative of the tensions between the judiciary and the BMCVA - despite the protestations of the BMCVA that officials such as the judiciary gave them support. Judges, for different reasons, appeared reluctant to pass heavy sentences and juries were reluctant to convict. To some extent this undermines, yet again, current theories that an homogeneous and middle class state exercised its power coherently.[69]

The BMCVA's attitude towards impenitent prostitutes further illuminates the complex relationship between gender and class. Not all women, for instance, were thought deserving of the protective hand of the BMCVA. In contrast to the protection offered to the abandoned mother and the abused child, unremorseful prostitutes were treated harshly. Such prostitutes were excluded from the category of the deserving and fell outside the moral boundaries set up by the BMCVA. In engaging in prostitution women defied the concept of 'femininity',[70] violated their gender role and relinquished their rights to the care and protection usually extended to the 'weaker sex'. Working prostitutes had also narrowed the public/private divide. They had invaded the public - more masculine - sphere by working on the streets. And as public women they were treated publicly.[71] Whereas repentant prostitutes were deemed innocent victims and looked after, the unrepentant ones needed to be restrained because they threatened the status quo:

> They are a serious injury to the respectable neighbours. The constant sight of vicious manners, and of the ease, independence, and finery obtained by vicious means, is a perpetual danger to the virtue of the sons and daughters of respectable inhabitants...For the evil indicated, they feel that there is only one remedy - repression. By the joint action of policeman and citizen, it can be repressed.[72]

Classed alongside pornographers and child abusers, the working prostitute's freedom was - whatever the reason - to be curbed. The BMCVA used the newly passed CLAA and their friendly association with the Birmingham police force to try to close down brothels.[73] Complaints were forwarded to the District Superintendent of Police to ensure that this happened. In 1891 there were forty one complaints about brothels in Birmingham by the BMCVA. Every one of these was investigated and when there was sufficient evidence to obtain a conviction they were referred to the Superintendent of the Police for prosecution.[74] For instance, in 1899 fifteen 'disorderly' houses were prosecuted and ultimately closed.[75] Pressure was also brought to bear on landlords to refuse to rent rooms to women thought to be prostitutes.[76]

Unrepentant prostitutes were the casualties of the gendered and middle class ideology of the BMCVA. As Walkowitz has pointed out in relation to the Contagious Diseases Acts, official intervention into the lives of the prostitute may have damaged the fragile social equilibrium which existed between them and the local community in which they lived. As a result of increased police vigilance and middle class interference prostitutes may well have become increasingly marginalised, thus facilitating the

creation of an outcast group. Repressive police action might also, as in the CDA districts, have made the move into prostitution more permanent.[77] The BMCVA, however, seemed to be unconscious of the social dislocation that their actions might generate for the way in which they enacted their policies reflects a middle class confidence both in ideological and practical terms. In addition, the BMCVA appeared unconcerned about the future of women thrown out of the brothels or rented accommodation. As a consequence of the action of the BMCVA, prostitutes were denied access to a safe place in which to work. The closure of brothels made the working lives of prostitutes more difficult and increased their physical vulnerability. Prostitutes who left the brothels and lodgings had little alternative but to work on the streets[78] or through a pimp, or else give up their trade, enter a reformatory[79] or even go into domestic service. The BMCVA's umbrella therefore only sheltered the favoured few: the rest were either forced to find cover elsewhere or get caught in the torrent of police surveillance.

Throughout its short existence, the BMCVA tried to be a powerful force in defining appropriate gender behaviour, by making sure it was reinforced through education, office work and legislative action. Nevertheless, it was never a particularly effective agency of moral enforcement. Ultimately, the BMCVA failed of course to secure moral purity in Birmingham and failed to enforce its middle class gendered code upon the working class female.

Notes and References

(1) See F Mort, Dangerous Sexualities,1987, pp106-106 and pp126-130 and J Walkowitz, City of Dreadful Delight, 1992, for a discussion of the reasons why the CLAA was passed.

(2) The NVA has been heralded as a repressive force in British politics by J Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian England, 1983, p99 and pp251-252. In contrast the NVA has been viewed as a feminist inspired organisation by radical feminists like M Jackson, The Real Facts of Life, 1994, pp29-30 and S Jeffreys, The Spinster and her Enemies, 1985.

(3) BMCVA, Occasional Papers, 1886-1904.

(4) The Vigilance Record, April 1895, p12.

(5) NVA Executive Minutes, 1885-1914.

(6) A number of reasons can be suggested for the demise of the BMCVA. Firstly, it did not seem to recover from Reverend Wastell's death in 1894. Reverend Wastell had been a particularly active and efficient Secretary. Secondly, after Reverend Wastell's death the Secretaryship was beset with problems. One 'unsatisfactory' Secretary resigned in 1894, a second was forced to resign in 1894 because of circumstances related to his private life and in 1902 a third left because he had lied about the number of meetings he had held. Thirdly, by 1904 many of the influential founders of the BMCVA were either extremely old or dead. Fourthly, the BMCVA did not recover from its affiliation to the NVA. By 1904 the "question had therefore arisen as to the advisability of continuing the work in Birmingham or of allowing it to lapse." (NVA Executive Minutes, January 24th, 1904.) The BMCVA enjoyed a brief respite when a National organiser became involved but when he left to take up a post with Dr. Barnado's the Birmingham branch collapsed. Social purity therefore disappeared from the moral agenda in early twentieth century Birmingham.

(7) Bland has analysed these different tendencies within the NVA. She has suggested that the NVA mixture of repressive and statist ideas combined somewhat uneasily with feminism. (See L Bland, "'Purifying' the Public World: feminist vigilantes in late Victorian England", 1992 for further details.)

(8) See Part Two and Appendix 1 for a detailed summary.

(9) The first of these was associated with the LACFG, the second with the BMCVA and the third with the BLACPYG. The BLACPYG will be the subject of a later chapter.

(10) Both M Jackson, The Real Facts of Life, 1993, p39 and S

Jeffreys, The Spinster and her Enemies, 1985, pp24-26, maintain that social purity and feminism were linked.

(11) See J Weeks, Sex, Politics and Society, Longman, 1981, pp81-93 for a further exploration of this theme.

(12) For instance see the Vigilance Record, February 1888. Many feminists also criticised the double standard. For an example of feminist criticism of the double standard see M Jackson, The Real Facts of Life, 1992, p27-28.

(13) Mrs C D Sturge, BMCVA Occasional Papers, March 1889, p3.

(14) BMCVA Occasional Paper, May 1887, p2.

(15) Vigilance Record, December, 1897.

(16) BMCVA Occasional Paper, March 1889, p2.

(17) BMCVA Occasional Paper, 1893.

(18) BMCVA Occasional Papers, 1887-1893.

(19) BMCVA Occasional Paper, 1893, p2.

(20) Vigilance Record, March 1902, p4.

(21) The language used in many of these reports was highly colourful. As Walkowitz has pointed out the "narratives of sexual danger" produced by the Maiden Tribute influenced the language of others. (J Walkowitz, City of Dreadful Delight, Virago, 1992, pp81-135.) It almost certainly affected the writings of the Birmingham groups.

(22) L was either under the legal age of consent when B seduced her or else the criminal offence was for rape rather than seduction.

(23) BMCVA Annual Report, July 1887, p13.

(24) BMCVA Occasional Papers, 1887-1893.

(25) BMCVA Occasional Paper, 1892, p2.

(26) See F M L Thompson, "Social Control in Victorian Britain", The Economic History Review, Volume XXX1V, Number 2, May 1981, p192-195 for a discussion of the role of parents in passing on societal values.

(27) BMCVA Occasional Papers, 1887-1893.

(28) Vigilance Record, February 1902, p3.

(29) The work of the BLACPYG will be considered in the next chapter.

(30) BMCVA Occasional Papers, 1887-1893.

(31) Vigilance Record, January 1902, p6.

(32) It took over ninety years and the formation of the Child Support Agency for this wish - in theory - to be achieved.

(33) Vigilance Record, March 1902, p4.

(34) BMCVA Occasional Papers, 1887-1893.

(35) BMCVA Occasional Papers, 1887-1893.

(36) Although the BMCVA recognised the equation between sexual harassment and domestic service, the women in the organisation did not question the nature of the Homes they managed.

(37) See L Bland, "'Purifying' the Public World: feminist vigilantes in late Victorian England", 1992.

(38) Vigilance Record, July 1897, p8.

(39) BMCVA Annual Reports, 1887-1893; BMCVA Occasional Papers, 1887-1893.

(40) BMCVA Occasional Papers, 1887-1893.

(41) BMCVA Occasional Papers, 1887-1893.

(42) The Men and Women's Club, founded in 1885, discussed issues of marriage and sexuality, but the BMCVA were not influenced by these ideas. (J Walkowitz, City of Dreadful Delight, 1992, p135.

(43) Vigilance Record, May 1902, p4.

(44) BMCVA Occasional Papers, 1887-1893.

(45) BMCVA Occasional Papers, 1887-1893.

(46) See M Langan and B Schwartz, Crises in the British State, 1880-1930, Hutchinson, 1985 for an examination of this.

(47) See L Bland, "'Purifying' the Public World: feminist vigilantes in late Victorian England", 1992 for an analysis of the contradictory nature of the NVA.

(48) F Mort has suggested that the NVA used the state apparatus as a weapon to fight against immorality. (F Mort, Dangerous Sexualities, 1987, pp133-135.)

(49) By the 1880's women formed between 12%-25% of the local electorate but were still disbarred from national Parliamentary politics until 1918 when women over the age of thirty were enfranchised.

(50) F Mort, Dangerous Sexualities, 1981, p134.

(51) BMCVA Occasional Paper, 1893, p3.

(52) For one example, see BMCVA Occasional Paper, 1889, pp2-3.

(53) Town Crier, February, 1890, p10.

(54) NVA Occasional Papers, 1891, pp4-5.

(55) Vigilance Record, April 1900, p10.

(56) Vigilance Record, April 1902, p4.

(57) Vigilance Record, January 1902, p6.

(58) Vigilance Record, April 1892, p25.

(59) NVA Executive Committee Minutes, March 29th 1898.

(60) The BMCVA were equally opposed to homosexuality although never named it as such. It is interesting to note that the word, coined in the mid 19th century, (J Weeks, Sex, Politics and Society, 1981, pp99-100) was never used by the BMCVA. Nevertheless, they were aware of the practice and condemned it. "the offence would be inconceivable but for the fact that it was well known to all students of history, being charged especially against the worst of the Roman Emperors" (BMCVA Occasional Paper, 1891, p4.) However, this theory was rarely practised: only one prosecution was ever reported in the Annual Reports and Occasional Papers.

(61) See M Jackson, The Facts of Life, 1993 and S Jeffreys, The Spinster and her Enemies, 1985.

(62) BMCVA Occasional Paper, July 1887, pp3-4.

(63) Presuming of course that the law in this instance was the manifestation of middle-class male power.

(64) M Jackson, The Real Facts of Life, 1993.

(65) S Jeffreys, The Spinster and her Enemies, 1985.

(66) The following is a typical account of what happened to abused girls: "Aged 12. Alleged outrage by man of whom complainant gave description. Efforts to trace him unsuccessful. Police rendered invaluable help. Girl sent to a Home out of town by Ladies connected with a kindred Association"(BMCVA Annual Report, 1888, p10.)

(67) BMCVA Occasional Paper, 1892, p6.

(68) BMCVA, Occasional Paper, 1894, p6.

(69) L Mahood, for example, suggests that the bourgeoisie and police officials cooperated to impose a strict moral code onto working class women. (L Mahood, The Magdalenes, 1992 pp199-153.)

(70) As previously mentioned, women were supposed to be both chaste and sexually passive.

(71) See L Bland, Banishing the Beast: English feminism and sexual morality, 1994, pp133 for a discussion of the notion of public women.

(72) BMCVA Occasional Paper, 1892, p5.

(73) Bland suggests that prosecutions of brothels rose dramatically after the CLAA 1885. From 1885-1914 there were over 1,200 prosecutions each year. (L Bland, Banishing the Beast: English feminism and sexual morality, 1994, p116.) In contrast there were only about 86 prosecutions before 1885.

(74) BMCVA Occasional Paper, 1891, p5.

(75) These figures were derived from the NVA Executive Minutes, 1899. Court records registered 12 people convicted for either running or helping to run a brothel during a similar period. Under the CLAA 1885 brothel owners could be fined up to £20 or three months imprisonment. Most brothel owners in Birmingham were fined £5 + costs or one month imprisonment. Occasionally they were fined £10. There is no way of knowing whether these were prosecuted as a result of the BMCVA's intervention. It is also impossible to discover how many brothels there were in Birmingham. (Register of the Court of Summary Jurisdiction, 1899-1900.)

(76) BMCVA Occasional Papers, 1887-1893.

(77) J Walkowitz suggests that the CDA's - along with the special police force, the enforced attendance at lock hospitals, the appearances in court - stamped women as prostitutes more firmly than ever before. This marked them out from their local community and thus estranged them from it. As a consequence, women could not engage in part-time prostitution quite so easily. (J Walkowitz, Prostitution and Victorian Society, 1980, pp201-213.) Increased police action in non-CDA areas such as Birmingham could have produced a similar result.

(78) This was similar to the national picture. Women were thrown out on the streets where they were placed in a much more vulnerable position. See L Bland, Banishing the Beast: English feminism and sexual morality, 1994, pp116-117.

(79) From the numbers who entered either the Magdalen Asylum or Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home one can deduce that very few took up this particular option. Consequently, one can assume that the BMCVA did not wipe out prostitution, as Weeks suggests in relation to the CDA's, but merely changed the way in which it

operated. (J Weeks, Sex, Politics and Society, 1981)

Chapter Six: The Birmingham Ladies' Association for the Care and Protection of Young Girls

Introduction

In 1887 the Birmingham Ladies' Association for the Care and Protection of Young Girls (BLACPYG) was founded as a preventive agency as opposed to a reform organisation.[1] It established three working branches, the Moral Educational Branch (MEB), a Workhouse Magdalen Branch, (WMB) and a training home for Wayward and Troublesome Girls at Summer Hill.[2] Two offshoots of the BLACPYG, the Agatha Stacey Homes (ASH) and the Girls' Night Shelter (GNS) were also established as preventive agencies.[3] From the outset women organised all these groups, though Sir Halliwell Rogers became nominal President of the GNS after the death of his wife, and men - for a short time only - joined the ASH Committees.

The BLACPYG was founded mainly because of the alleged inadequacy of the existing reform movement. Prevention, as mentioned before, was seen to be better than cure. Like the LACFG, the impetus for the BLACPYG came from a visit made by Ellice Hopkins to Birmingham in 1884 when she spoke at several meetings.[4] At these meetings, Ellice Hopkins suggested the need for a preventive, as opposed to a reform, association to stop moral decline.

> Her burning zeal, her indignation at the perils and needs of these helpless ones, touched many a woman's heart, while the unanswerable logic with which she proved the superiority of prevention over cure, convinced them of the wisdom of helping ere graver mischief was done.[5]

The BLACPYG was heavily influenced by Ellice Hopkins' pamphlet How to Start Preventive Work.[6] In this, Ellice Hopkins outlined in detail the principles of such preventive groups. They were to be divided into four sections, a preventive branch which had a training home, free registry office and a clothing club; an educational branch; a workhouse magdalene branch; and lastly a petitioning branch.[7] Her approach encapsulated certain middle class views of appropriate working class female occupations and behaviours:

> What we want is some rough and ready method for getting them into respectable service; overcoming the difficulty of <paying for> the outfit without pauperising them, and in cases where they come from very poor or bad homes, and have had no opportunity of learning even the rudiments of service, being able to give them a little training, sufficient to set them on their feet.[8]

Hopkins was no revolutionary who wanted to change the social and economic world[9] - hers was a pragmatic solution to the problem of prostitution and the associated problem of working class female employment.

Unfortunately the name, Ladies' Associations for Friendless Girls, (the name of Ellice Hopkins' preventive associations) was already in use in Birmingham by women engaged in reform work. Consequently, the name BLACPYG was reluctantly agreed upon. Concern was expressed at the time that the BLACPYG's name was inappropriate because it did not convey accurately the exact class of girls whom it existed to protect, namely the friendless.[10]

The founding of the BLACPYG could have resulted in acrimony between it and the older LACFG. However, this does not seem to be have been the case, probably because the joint membership of the LACFG and the BLACPYG mitigated any conflict. The two associations worked hand in hand, many active members of the elder Association becoming workers for the newer one. From 1891 they issued a joint Annual Report, established a joint fund and held some joint meetings. There was, however, no question of the two organisations amalgamating[11] but it does show how the women viewed their work as complementary rather than competitive. It also indicates a measure of female unity between Nonconformist groups.

From its inception, social purity in Birmingham - like the LACFG and its parent organisation, the NVA - was associated with suffrage politics and was influenced by feminist ideas. The MEB, for instance, was headed by Mrs A C Osler, a well known advocate of woman's suffrage.[12] The BLACPYG's emphasis on an all woman's organisation may have emerged directly from the feminist politics of women like Mrs Osler. Evidence that many of the BLACPYG women were feminists implicitly assumes that women of all classes worked together in harmony and could illustrate how considerations of gender overrode class interests:

> Our work then is primarily to enlist in the teaching of a high standard of morality those who are engaged in educating the young - firstly parents; secondly, teachers. Being a committee of women ... we have hitherto devoted our efforts to securing the direct help of mothers, rather than of fathers.[13]

The BLACPYG aimed to unite working class and middle class women. They believed it important to train and educate young girls, to assist single mothers, the destitute and the mentally retarded. Because there was inadequate state provision for these groups, middle class women offered to help their supposedly less fortunate sisters. An element of female solidarity was therefore evident, as it was in the LACFG, in the foundation and development of the BLACPYG:

> bring refined and cultured women and girls into contact and active relationship with their less fortunate sisters are a necessity, unless the better classes are to neglect their duty of sharing with others what has been so abundantly given to them....and unless the poor girl children and young women of our factories, courts and workrooms are to be left to grow rougher and less pure because the more refined and spiritual side of their nature is dwarfed and eventually killed.[14]

As the above extract indicates, notions of gender were located within a well regulated class context: the woman centred approach of the BLACPYG was framed within a window of power and authority. Female unity was seen in, if not in paternalistic ways, then certainly in 'maternalistic' ones bearing the same mixture of traits of humanitarianism and class domination. It was a one way power relationship whereby middle class women exerted their own definition of what was considered to be correct forms of behaviour and appropriated the moral selves of the working class. Equally, this care was framed within an economic context. Although the BLACPYG was genuinely concerned about the plight of vulnerable young women it was all too often care at the minimum of financial cost. In addition, only the 'deserving'

poor were targeted and assisted.[15]

The BLACPYG - like the BMCVA - endorsed women's nurturing role. As the primary carers of children, women supervised the intellectual, emotional, spiritual and, most importantly, moral education of the young. As women were perceived to be the moral guardians of the nation it was thought essential that their help be secured in promoting sexual responsibility. Women, as a result, were obliged to teach chastity to the men in their families. Certainly M Littleboy[16], an influential member of the BLACPYG, believed that women were critical to the teaching of moral standards:

> Our ideals are very high, no less than changing the women's lives and through them their homes, their husbands and their children.[17]

By aligning themselves with these conventional ideas, however, the BLACPYG were undermining their feminist principles. At no time did the BLACPYG offer a critique of marriage and the family, despite the fact that the nature of marriage was questioned by some feminists.[18] Women may have been encouraged to join the BLACPYG simply because men were harder to recruit. Men, for instance, did not have the opportunity to attend daytime meetings because they were engaged in paid work.

To reiterate, the concepts of class and gender, as in the analyses of the previous organisations, cannot be usefully employed as discrete categories. There was certainly a relationship, sometimes a dialectical one, between class and

gender. These analytical tools will be employed to analyse the three branches of the BLACPYG, namely the MEB, the WMB and Summer Hill Home.

i. Moral Educational Branch

The Moral Educational Branch (MEB) was founded in 1887. It lasted only ten years.[19] Its offspring, Snowdrop Bands remained intact until they too gradually faded way. By 1907, as mentioned before, Snowdrop Bands had disappeared.[20] Between 1891-1897, however, the MEB met once a month in the hope that "more may be done, in earnest practical teaching, and by distribution of suitable literature to prevent the ruin and degradation of young lives"[21] During its ten year existence the MEB set up different groups. Various all women organisations, Drawing Room Meetings, Mothers in Council, Mothers' Unions, Elder Girls' Classes and Snowdrop Bands, were founded to promote the high moral standards in which it believed. In addition, the MEB worked closely with other groups such as the BMCVA to amend the CLAA of 1885. The MEB provides yet another example of the contradictory relationship both within and between gender and class in moral reform. This section will fall into two parts. First of all the ideological underpinnings of the MEB will be analysed. This will be followed by an evaluation of the practice of the MEB.

As the ideological wing of the BLACPYG, the MEB saw itself as

attacking the causes of immorality at a fundamental level. Rescue and reform were viewed as "comparatively useless while the present state of social opinion allows the incessant creation of fresh victims to be rescued in our midst".[22] The MEB therefore acted as a preventive agency rather than a reforming one. There were striking similarities between the BMCVA and the MEB in their rejection of the double standard but the point perhaps needs reiterating. The MEB rejected the double standard of morality in favour of a single standard for both sexes. It aimed to promote stringent standards in all classes and in both sexes in order to eradicate immorality. Because the moral law was the same for both sexes the guilt of breaking it was as great for men as for women. Consequently, both girls and boys were to be taught the virtue of purity and be warned of the dangers resulting from its loss:

> If our girls are to be pure, and strong, and virtuous, our boys must also be valiant for the truth. We have not to teach them identically the same lessons, but the principles of morals are eternal, universal, and without respect of persons.[23]

Superficially, this perhaps provides an example of how feminist politics defied moral orthodoxy. Moral reform could be viewed as empowering women because it gave them control over vital areas of human behaviour. However, it was a false empowerment: the challenge to the double standard was still set, like the BMCVA's, within the parameters of orthodox gender assumptions. Although both men and women were expected to adopt high moral standards, it was still women who were expected to promulgate them. Impure thoughts, words and deeds were equally reprehensible in men and

women but the responsibility for ensuring chastity lay with the latter.[24] In effect, the MEB subscribed to a moral code which demanded more of women than men because they expected women to regulate behaviour. Chastity and purity depended on young women rather than their male partners: it was up to young women to refuse sexual overtures rather than the responsibility of the male to practise restraint. Underlying this supposed rejection of the double standard was a subtle reinterpretation of its message. Indeed the double standard so abhorred by the MEB was reinvented with a new twist.

There was another paradox with regard to gender behavioural expectations. On the one hand, men who controlled most areas of life, were deemed to be out of control in moral affairs. On the other hand, women who lacked control economically, politically, and socially were deemed to be more powerful in sexual matters:

> There is a great deal of courtship and of 'walking out' on these summer evenings, and we must speak plainly to them about exacting respectful treatment from their companions. Much may be done by arousing their sense of womanly dignity and desire to win the reverence, most men will pay to a good girl and by reminding them of the influence they may use, or throw away.[25]

Moreover, as women were held more responsible for high standards of morality they were culpable if standards dropped. Thus the abandonment of the double standard by the MEB did not liberate women but merely changed the nature of their sexual oppression. The similarities between the mixed sex group of the BMCVA and the single sex group of the MEB might suggest that religious

affiliation and political belief were more important than gender in framing ideology.

Mothers' Unions were one of a number of groups founded by the MEB to promote moral purity.[26] Prochaska argues that Mothers' Unions were part of a maternal culture in which middle class women with a strong parochial duty attempted to break down class barriers.[27] The Mothers' Unions run by the MEB wished to include women from all social classes in its sphere of influence:

> Such a Union if conducted on the highest lines, may do much to help Mothers of all classes to recognise more fully their God-given responsibility, and to give intelligent care to the training of their families. This is no class matter, and a Mothers' Union will fail of its full measure of usefulness, unless it embraces Mothers of every social grade in a common bond of work, and of prayer.[28]

Although the above excerpt supports Prochaska's analysis by suggesting that Mothers' Unions were directed at all social classes, this was not borne out in practice. The unity that was envisaged between women of different classes was illusory. Class, as well as gender, was often of paramount importance in the formation of groups. Distinctly different associations were organised for the middle and working classes. Drawing Room meetings, as with the BMCVA, were organised for the middle and upper classes. Working class women did not have 'Drawing Rooms' - it was a middle class expression and a middle class place - so both the terminology used and the location of the venue suggests that working class women were excluded.[29] Similarly, the 'Meetings for Educated Mothers', called 'Mothers in

Council'[30] precluded working class women.[31] Yet both of these associations were relatively democratic in that meetings and lectures were organised by members rather than by Committee.[32]

In contrast, Mothers' Unions, Elder Girls' Meetings and Snowdrop Bands were founded for the working class. The aim of these groups was to transmit the moral message to a wider audience. For example, Mothers' Unions were held in working class districts, often in difficult neighbourhoods - "the mothers' meeting held once a week in a street where the police almost fear to go"[33] - which suggests that the less 'respectable' of the working class was singled out as an object of attention. Mothers' Meetings were called 'ordinary Mothers' Meetings'[34] probably because they were aimed at working class women.[35]

Moral Education classes were also organised for young working class women. The MEB lectured to factory girls, at the homes in Monument Road, the Rushton Street Evening Home and the Board School at Burlington Street, Aston.[36] It is likely that these meetings were the fore-runners of the Snowdrop Bands which were formed in 1889 and survived the demise of the MEB in 1897. For eight years Snowdrop Bands were one of the major associations of the Moral Educational Branch.[37]

Snowdrop Bands were created for working class young women over the age of eleven.[38] Snowdrop Bands were initially organised through Board Schools each of which had its own Band with a

leader responsible for the conduct of its Members.[39] When the MEB had limited success[40] in recruiting pupils they, in collaboration with the School Boards, launched a series of lessons for young girl pupils. Snowdrop Bands were also founded at Summer Hill Home, in factories and Bible Classes. A Committee of the Factory Helpers' Union supported the introduction of Snowdrop Bands and several ladies conducted Dinner Hour Meetings in various factories. The following extract waxes enthusiastically about the success of such meetings but it is not known whether they recruited many young women from them:

> During the summer months an effort was made to reach the girls employed in factories, permission was granted at Kynoch's great Ammunition Factory for a meeting, which was addressed by Mrs Phillp, on love and courtship. Upwards of 300 listened intently to her very searching and striking address, which must have helped and instructed *not a few.* The little book 'Sweethearts' was given to each girl at the close. They were eagerly accepted, and many expressed a hope that another visit should be paid. One or two factories have been visited but we want more openings in this direction.[41]

One member of the MEB, Miss Nunnely, had a particularly low estimation of working class life and behaviour, as witnessed by the following derogatory remarks. Snowdrop Bands might have been organised because the MEB held a rather poor opinion of the working class making it difficult to believe that class harmony was fostered by such an approach, as the following quote suggests:

> fearfully low tone of conversation which generally prevails where any number of uneducated women are thrown together ... (and was) ... painfully struck by 'the light and immodest conduct' of many of the working girls...
>
> The more I know of the working classes, the more I become convinced that the chief cause of many, if not of most, of

> the social evils which we deplore, is to be found in the indecent nature of the talk carried on amongst the girls themselves. By this means the decay of purity is begun in the mind long before it becomes visible in the outward life.[42]

Such comments seem likely to have strengthened class barriers rather than broken them down. Furthermore, it was usually middle class women who organised these Mothers' Meetings, Elder Girls' Clubs and Snowdrop Bands, and set the agenda. In contrast to the Drawing Room Meetings and the Mothers in Council, these groups were distinctly undemocratic. The talks given and topics discussed at these meetings, consistent with the formality of meetings more generally at this time, were coordinated by the middle class managers of the MEB, not by the women who attended:

> ... make use of the Adult School lesson sheet, *to use* pictures to illustrate the Bible session and to plan if possible a separate room for the Babies. Amongst several suggestions we have been also advised to plan lectures and discussions on such subjects as Health, the care of children, furnishing of houses etc.[43]

Underlying the insistence that middle class women should direct classes was an assumption that working class women were incapable of organising their own groups.[44]

Middle class women also imposed their own economic, sexual and moral agenda on to the working class. At the Birmingham Mothers' Meetings, dress-making was thought to encourage self-help[45] whilst baby classes taught proper child-care. Temperance was advocated as drink was believed to be the root of immorality. Thrift and economy were established as positive virtues to be

inculcated at every opportunity:

> Teaching the Mothers how to feed their children is most important and also the subject of thrift. It is most astonishing how the poor get into debt and run up bills and pay more for what they buy than it is worth through ignorance.[46]

In particular, Snowdrop Bands endeavoured to transform the conduct and character of young working class women into those of a respectable member of the middle class. Conformity to these bourgeois standards of gentility, modesty and chastity were regarded as the key to desirable female behaviour.

Furthermore, the MEB adhered to the principles of chastity and moderation rather than sexual autonomy. It has been argued elsewhere that the purity campaign was initially radical but was coopted later on by the right to become more repressive.[47] In Birmingham, this shift did not seem to take place. Even at the beginning, despite the feminist leanings of its organisers, there was an emphasis on a rather conformist sexual theory and practice. Subjects covered in Drawing Room Meetings, Mothers' Unions and Councils centred around social purity. Talks on "How best to train and guard our sons and daughters in the paths of purity", the "Moral Training of Children" and "How best to protect our daughters" formed the basis of each meeting.[48] In particular, Snowdrop Bands aimed to promote honesty, chastity, civility and to uphold the moral principles favoured by the middle and by many of the upper class. Heavy symbolic meaning was attached to the snowdrop which became an emblem of purity and chastity. Snowdrops were displayed in abundance at all Band

meetings and drawn on every leaflet and journal. Each young woman was issued with a membership card costing 1d on which a picture of a snowdrop was drawn as an artistic metaphor of purity. On the back of each was printed a promise which reflects this repressive sexual politics:

> We the Members of the Snowdrop Band, sign our names to show that we have agreed that wherever we are, and in whatever company, we will, with God's help, earnestly try, both by our example and influence to discourage all wrong conversation, light and immodest conduct, and the reading of foolish and bad books.[49]

Beneath the pledge, which encapsulated the aims and objectives of the Snowdrop Band, was a space for the owner's signature as a symbol of personal acceptance. The signed membership card acted as an official reminder to its owner of the obligations attached to membership.

Seniors were given lectures on love, courtship and marriage whereas the need for quiet conduct, dress, health, friends and good books formed the basis of talks to younger members.[50] Talks on thrift and economical cookery were also given to the elder girls. Although the MEB believed that they covered every topic which impinged on a young woman's interest, it was a limited middle class diet of gentility, hygiene and economy, often taught through the experiences of the great and the good.

> Snowdrop teaching includes as its proper sphere every subject which, directly or indirectly, touches a girl's life. Nothing which it behoves our girls to know in order to make them better women should be omitted from the talks for which the meeting of our Band ...'A Beautiful Woman', 'True Womanliness', 'Love', and 'Marriage', but also upon 'Health', 'Cleanliness', 'Thrift', 'Books', 'Influence',

> 'Friendship', and other allied subjects. Stories of the lives of the great and distinguished women are particularly suitable.[51]

Lessons on modesty of behaviour, conversation, companions, books, dress and the choice of occupation were adopted by the Birmingham School Board to be taught in schools.[52] The following extract illustrates the MEB's philosophy of prevention, its fear of moral decline, its idealisation of young women, its emphasis on mothers as guardians of a future generation and the emotive language used to express these beliefs:

> Ours is a preventive effort. We have recognised the fact - and those engaged in rescue work will endorse its truth - that girls do not go wrong all at once, but that their innocence has been soiled long before the crisis of temptation comes - soiled by the words they hear, and the books they read, by living in an atmosphere of evil thoughts...We want to take captive the young girl's imagination in the name of Christ, Purity, of True Womanhood, - and to fill with lofty and powerful ideals the souls of these weak impressionable girls who are destined to a high and solemn office. Are they not the mothers of the next generation, and sure to influence its character and well-being?[53]

The BLACPYG did not only wish to control working class young women but wanted them to internalise the social mores of the middle class:

> Our aim is to raise the whole standard of life of our working girls, especially with regard to purity of thought and conversation, while they are still young enough to be led and helped. We want to give them some nobler, gentler idea of conduct and character, and to awaken in them some clear perception of what God meant a woman's life and influence to be. We want to get them to make a brave stand against the kind of conversation so freely carried on in many kitchens, work rooms, etc. and against the low tone of mind, and contentment with unclean surroundings, too prevalent amongst them.[54]

Such advice and education - if it ever worked - may have created tensions within the working class community. The acceptance of middle class standards of morality could have engendered conflict with colleagues at work and family at home.[55] As a consequence of conforming to the Snowdrop Band's pledge one section of the working class was set against the other. If class loyalties did emerge at work they may have been swiftly destroyed by competing moralities. Snowdrop Band young women were supposed to show their distaste when working colleagues talked in unseemly ways or tried to engage them in 'impure' conversation. It is curious to note that the MEB perceived married women, not men, to be the greatest danger to young women.[56] Married women were believed to deliberately corrupt the minds of single girls.[57] The common womanhood envisaged by the MEB was therefore little more than sophistry.

The tensions between gender and class were epitomised most forcibly in the MEB's support of amendments to the CLAA 1885. The MEB, like the BMCVA, wished to ensure that men who sexually abused under age girls were convicted. It agreed with the policies of the BMCVA and its parent organisation, the National Vigilance Association. Each wished to raise the age of consent to eighteen, get rid of the "reasonable cause to believe" clause,[58] extend the time limit for convictions[59]and make sure that incest was criminalised.[60] Unlike the BMCVA, the MEB did not press for individual convictions but instead joined the BMCVA in their campaigns to change the law. In 1895 the MEB and the

Workhouse Magdalen Branch organised a meeting with Miss Lidgett, an influential Poor Law Guardian from London, on the need to extend the provisions of the CLAA. At the meeting the following resolution was passed:

> ... this meeting earnestly desires that the Criminal Law Amendment Act should be further amended in the particular of the 'three months limit' and the abolition of 'the reasonable cause to suppose' a girl to be over sixteen, as a legal defence for ruining her.[61]

One hundred copies of this resolution were printed and sent to most of the other Societies for the Care of Young Girls throughout England. This proactive measure apparently promoted action in other towns and meetings were held in Manchester, Sheffield, Grimsby, Bristol at which resolutions were also passed.[62] Eventually the National Union of Women Workers supported the amendments. At the October Conference of Women Workers (1895) in Nottingham the following, more practically based, resolution was passed:

> That this Association approves of the proposals embodied in the Draft Bill of the National Vigilance Association, and trust that they will without delay become law, as they strike at the root of evils subversive of the moral life of the nation; and they request their President to forward this record of opinion to the Prime Minister, Home Secretary and Local Members when the bills are brought before Parliament.[63]

This national networking provides some evidence of middle class female solidarity which in turn presupposes that gender was a fairly important organising principle for the women of the MEB. However, the MEB needed male support. Throughout the campaign the MEB liaised with the BMCVA which welcomed the help of women's

organisations in changing public opinion and ultimately the law. Without the vote, women were powerless to propose amendments in the House of Commons and as governments could and often did ignore the problems and concerns of the unrepresented, women in many ways were without an influential voice. On the other hand, the BMCVA and NVA were able to exert pressure on supportive - and reluctant - M.P.'s.[64] Whether or not the BMCVA were successful is impossible to ascertain.

In supporting such extension, the MEB - like the BMCVA - was at one and the same time protecting young girls and giving the police greater powers of arrest thereby increasing the control exercised by the state over its citizens. There would thus appear to be little difference between the mixed gender and the all women organisations as both were willing to use the state apparatus to enforce moral behaviour. Class power, in this instance, appeared to predominate over gender. Nevertheless, the MEB and the BMCVA only seemed to agree over the prosecution of child sexual abusers. In other areas there were some crucial differences between them.[65] Whereas the BMCVA took a punitive stance on prostitution there is no evidence of the MEB doing likewise, possibly because the aim of the MEB was protection rather than the wholesale repression of women.

It can therefore be concluded that the MEB was motivated by a variety of factors. On the one hand they sincerely believed in the development of a moral code which transcended class and

gender, but the ways in which this was enacted reinforced those same barriers they were at pains to break down. It also reaffirmed orthodox opinion on female sexuality, attitudes and behaviour. And as was demonstrated in the introduction, the MEB failed in its endeavours and never became a moral force in Birmingham.

ii. Workhouse Magdalen Branch

The second branch of the BLACPYG, the Workhouse Magdalen Branch (WMB) was founded in 1885 to help young single women in their first illegitimate confinement. In its first year the WMB only helped five cases but by 1909 it was interviewing - though not necessarily helping - up to 130 cases a year.[66] It came under the auspices of the BLACPYG for six years, after which time it became a separate organisation. The WMB had two sections: at Birmingham and at West Bromwich.[67] In 1896, when Mrs Phillp resigned, the West Bromwich Branch broke away from the BLACPYG. Shortly after, the rest of the WMB seceded from the BLACPYG to continue as a separate organisation:

> the Committee after careful consideration unanimously decided that the official connection between this Branch and the Parent Society should cease - in the belief and hope that more local interest would be taken in the west Bromwich Workhouse Magdalen Branch if it were an independent organisation.[68]

The Birmingham Magdalen Branch was part of a larger women's movement: visiting single mothers in workhouses in an attempt to help and reform them was a national pursuit. Concern was

expressed that in 1880, one in twenty children were born out of wedlock, many of whom were workhouse babies. All over England, women guardians worked with philanthropic women to help unmarried mothers.[69] The WMB did likewise. Different groups of Birmingham women - Poor Law Guardians and philanthropists - joined together to lend succour to other, less fortunate, women. Such female unity seems to provide a fine example of the ways in which gender identity transcended that of class. However, Poor Law Guardians were also agents of the middle class state - and like the philanthropists - overwhelmingly middle class themselves. This suggests that class was as important as gender in framing philanthropic work. Undeniably, the WMB viewed unmarried mothers at one and the same time as objects of feminine benevolence and a class burden on the rate system. It is these kind of contradictions between gender and class that will be the subject of this section.

Female unity certainly appeared to underpin workhouse visiting in Birmingham. The tensions which were said to exist between philanthropic women and the new brand of professional carers was not apparent in Birmingham.[70] Indeed it seemed as if there were harmonious relationships between the philanthropists of the WMB and the women Poor Law Guardians. Female Poor Law Guardians in Birmingham tended to belong to the BLACPYG or else be supportive of it.[71] If any tension did exist between these two groups it was swiftly evaporated by female solidarity in the face of male opposition.

Boards of Guardians, with notable exceptions, were male.[72] When Mrs Bracey became a Guardian in Birmingham in 1899 all young single mothers were dealt with entirely by men[73] - "men relieving officers, who made all enquiries, and a Committee also composed entirely of men, who interviewed the girls."[74] Poor Law minutes record an official vote of thanks each year to women visitors but these did not give the full picture. Women toiled within a structure which was essentially masculine and unsympathetic to women Guardians. Hollis claims that women Poor Law Guardians were generally resented by male Guardians who regarded them as interlopers. Indeed, Hollis shows just how widespread the antagonism towards women was. The earnestness and high standards of women Poor Law Guardians threatened their male colleagues. In 1882, for instance, one Kings Norton Guardian stated that "He should like the Kings Norton Guardians to pass a resolution expressing the wish of the board not to have any female assistance. The board room should be an Eden which no Eve should enter."[75] The association of women Poor Law Guardians with Eve is full of meaning. Eve as the woman who brought about the first fall was perhaps no better than the single mother. And like Eve, women Poor Law Guardians were ultimately corruptible.

Anna Lloyd's experiences as the first female Guardian in the Birmingham district confirmed Hollis' claims and illustrates the difficulties experienced by women visitors.[76] She wrote, in her memoirs, about her experience at a Board of Guardians Meeting in 1887. Although written sometime after her experience, Lloyd's

memoirs nevertheless convey some of the hostility encountered by women Poor Law Guardians, the attitudes of the male Guardians towards single mothers and the strength needed by women to stand up to their male counterparts:

> As to the Board of Guardians I have had a great opportunity and I am thankful I was strengthened to seize it. The question of the poor girls and the Lying-in wards came up, and some coarse remarks were made, and what I felt more deeply, they were received with very general and loud laughter. At the end of the Board I rose and said 'I cannot as a woman leave this room without expostulating with my fellow Guardians for their merriment over the poor inmates of the Lying-in wards. When we consider the anguish many of them suffer, when we consider that many young girls are ruined for life, it can be no cause for joking or laughter' but had 'black looks' on return to the Board and the newspapers made some harsh remarks. 'I am thankful I spoke - not so much for myself as for all women, and not so much to our Guardians as to all men.[77]

Almost twenty years later, Mrs Bracey, a Poor Law Guardian recounted a similar experience - perhaps an indication that throughout this period women laboured within unsympathetic patriarchal parameters:

> She could not help thinking that some of their gentlemen colleagues on the Board of Guardians did not sufficiently consider the importance of this question. She found it so on the Birmingham Board. She did not get very much sympathy, and, except from a few individuals, she did not get very much help.[78]

The fact that women Poor Law Guardians faced adverse criticism from men may have helped create an identity as a woman Guardian and have made them more sympathetic to women living in the workhouse. Female benevolence was reflected in the preventive work of the WMB. Like the LACFG, the Committee of the WMB subscribed to the 'slippery slope theory' whereby single

motherhood led directly to prostitution. It was feared that single parenthood led directly to "the ranks of the only trade that opens its arms to a helpless, ill-trained, homeless woman, burdened with a child, and with the stigma of the workhouse upon her character."[79] Even the naming of the Branch 'Magdalen' - like that of the Asylum - was resonant with ambivalent meaning. Single mothers, like Mary Magdalen herself, had been 'saved'. In the belief, therefore, that prostitution was the only occupation available to homeless ex-workhouse women, the WMB extended a sympathetic, and womanly, hand to first offenders:

> Her relations were extremely poor, and such of her clothes as had not been pawned during her trouble were worn out. The lady begged a tidy frock for her, and sent her with a note to some old employers, urging them to try her again. This they kindly did, and she is still in service...Thus a little timely advice and a few letters saved mother and child from starvation, and the former from suicide, or its alternative, a life of professional sin.[80]

Charity, however, was dispensed for reasons other than female solidarity. The WMB may have wished to contain the potential dangerous sexualities of working class single mothers. In helping them, the WMB believed that they had stopped the moral degeneration of the nation by blocking prostitution at source. Indeed, Thane has suggested that it was widely believed that the workhouse maternity wards were peopled by prostitutes.[81] Unmarried mothers - whether they became prostitutes or not - also posed a threat to the social equilibrium. Marriage, home and family, as mentioned previously, were seen as the bedrock of Western civilisation and of order, stability and morality within the country. Pregnant women were perhaps the living embodiment of

immorality and an all too visible reminder of female sexual incontinence.[82] In addition, single women challenged the middle class construction of femininity. In the 19th century marriage was a major signifier in constructing such a femininity.[83] Single mothers undermined this equation and offered an alternative definition of woman. If single mothers were helped and contained the threat to the moral order might diminish:

> The experience in this department of labour is of an encouraging character...The girls are often so ignorant, so utterly helpless, and so anxious to earn an honest living, and to do their duty to their children, that the folly of leaving them to face the world alone, with babies in their arms, cannot be over-rated. If good people will not help them others will, and they quickly pass from sin which has been the result of misplaced trust or of ignorance, to swell the number of professional temptresses who make the streets so dangerous for our boys.[84]

Furthermore, Agatha Stacey believed that single mothers were generally 'feeble-minded' and would produce offspring who were similarly mentally handicapped and criminally inclined:[85]

> The semi-imbecile children of semi-imbecile parents, incapable of self-restraint, wanting in moral stamina, ... are after a certain age free to leave the workhouse ... to go out into the world ... to add to the criminal population.[86]

The help given to working class single mothers by workhouse visitors was influenced by class. Firstly, not every single mother was given help.[87] It is perhaps in the selection process that class prejudices emerged more fully. Although more than fifty years had elapsed since the passing of the notorious Poor Law Amendment Act in 1834, the WMB shared some of the class assumptions which that embodied about the poor, especially in

relation to the bastardy clauses.[88] Consequently the compassion demonstrated by the WMB towards single mothers was affected by the former's class convictions. Single mothers were categorised into the deserving and undeserving poor.[89] The WMB, in line with the principles of the BLACPYG, created moral hierarchies by differentiating between those who were thought worthy of help and those who were not. The WMB believed in the classification of the inmates and the separation of the "hardened and depraved" from the younger and more innocent.[90] A distinction was made between those who had led a life of "professional vice" and those who had been led astray, but only once, by promises, ignorance or childish folly. It was presumed that 'the first fall' was due to "thoughtlessness, ignorance and inexperience and indicated not real depravity of character"[91]

Only single women in their first illegitimate confinement who felt a desire to "win their way back to an honest life" were therefore visited and helped. This was little different from the general policies in Unions whereby unmarried mothers were often categorised into innocent and depraved.[92]

Most of the cases in the workhouse seem to fall into the BLACPYG's category of deserving poor. Of the cases reported in 1887 most were destitute, had been abandoned by the father of their child and were without family, relatives or friends to help. More than 50% of the cases visited were domestic servants but a significant minority were factory or pit-brow wenches. In 1896 32 out of 137 single mothers visited in the workhouse were

pit-brow workers.[93] Very occasionally the single mothers were under the age of consent. There were two cases in 1892 of young girls aged respectively 16 and 17 but this was unusual. When this occurred prosecutions were instigated against the male seducers.[94]

Others were viewed as less deserving. The WMB did not offer help to unmarried mothers who produced more than one - and sometimes as many as ten - illegitimate children. It was feared that some single mothers who lived with their parents were deliberately sent to the workhouse to avoid midwifery and other medical expenses. Nineteen cases in the West Bromwich Branch of the WMB were "quite young girls living with their parents, who send them to the Workhouse to avoid exposure, and receive them home again after the ratepayers have borne the expense of their illness."[95] The WMB had little desire to offer free maternity care to those in need. Compassion was therefore mixed with a heavy blend of class scepticism. Once again the WMB shared the Benthamite belief that the workhouse should not be regarded as a rest home whose expenses were defrayed by ratepayers.

> Few ladies are aware of the light in which the Workhouse is regarded by thousands of girls who have fallen into sin. It is scarcely too much to say that the working of the Poor Law in this matter is a system of 'Sin made Easy'. They come to look upon the Workhouse as a home to which they have a perfect right to resort when they are in trouble. Into the house they are freely admitted, are lodged and fed, have the best medical aid and nursing at the expense of the ratepayers; and in the vast majority of cases not a penny can be recovered either from the girl herself, or from the man who is the author of such mischief.[96]

Agatha Stacey, like so many women Guardians throughout England, wanted women who had produced more than one illegitimate offspring to be compulsory detained so they could not bear any more.[97] Indeed, Agatha Stacey spoke so strongly in favour of the detention of single mothers that a resolution was passed at the Society for Promoting the Return of Women as Poor Law Guardians:

> Resolution 11: That this meeting asks for increased powers of detention in the case of able-bodied paupers of bad character, including single women entering for confinement, and paupers under order of removal.[98]

Such attitudes would hardly be likely to break down class barriers but might probably have caused resentment towards middle class visitors, but there is no evidence to substantiate this.

Financial considerations were also important when help was eventually given. The WMB aimed to find work - usually in domestic service - for the mother, a home for the child and money for the affiliation fee needed to make the father pay maintenance. Visitors dispensed advice and donated gifts of clothing to the women and their babies. The WMB also contributed to the child's upkeep if the single mother was in low paid work:

> The girls are helped in many ways after they leave the workhouse, situations are found for them, foster-mothers for their children, if the mother is engaged in domestic service, clothes often are supplied, and in some cases it has been found expedient to pay the part cost of placing the child out to nurse.[99]

Single mothers were discouraged from being a burden on the rates so work was quickly found for them as domestic servants. Because

domestic service wages were inadequate the WMB occasionally supplemented them by a small weekly contribution towards the keep of the child. Many women therefore received small pecuniary help in maintaining their children and were helped with clothing and footwear.[100] This kind gesture, however, was hedged with class prejudice. Firstly, it was probably cheaper to donate a small amount of money towards the upkeep of a child than to support both child and mother in the workhouse. Secondly, this type of help tended to reinforce the middle-class work ethic. Thirdly, it is not inconceivable that having responsibility for a young baby may have had a steadying effect on the young unmarried mother. However, there is no firm evidence with which to confirm these ideas.

The WMB also encouraged mothers to apply for affiliation summonses to force the father to pay towards the cost of his illegitimate offspring but this was abandoned in 1892:[101]

> The work of helping girls to obtain affiliation orders for their children has had to be given up, as it has been found useless in the present state of the law to spend time or money in the matter. Not only were there serious difficulties in the way of obtaining an order, but even when it had been obtained, every opportunity is allowed the man of evading payment by escape from the district.[102]

To some extent this provides an example of how the double standard was challenged in practice. The WMB were concerned that men, not just women, should be held responsible for the child. However, the reason that fathers were held equally responsible for an illegitimate baby was as much to do with economics as with morality. The MEB wished to penalise men by forcing them to pay

for their immoral crime. If the putative father did not wish to pay voluntarily then the mother was forced to take him to court. This was an expensive and lengthy procedure, the cost of which was often borne by the WMB.[103]

> It is most difficult to obtain disinterested witnesses; and then when a conviction is obtained, the man usually leaves the country, except in the case of a married man, who usually pays directly he finds the girl has friends to advise and help her.[104]

Despite the difficulties in collecting maintenance, the WMB also encouraged mothers to apply for affiliation summonses to force the father to pay towards the cost of his illegitimate offspring. As a result, several fathers forwarded money or else married the mothers.[105] It seems likely that the WMB insisted on affiliation summonses for economic reasons: once again the WMB - like the other organisations - was conscious of the cost to the rate payers. The WMB subsidised the cost of affiliation orders so that an income for the mother and child could be provided at a later date. Because of the difficulty of enforcing affiliation orders the WMB campaigned, along with other interested groups, to change the law in this respect. This marked a subtle shift away from an emphasis on individual solutions to collectivist ones - a change which, to some extent, mirrored both the actions of the BMCVA and the national development of social policy.

Economics, however, were only one factor in the WMB equation. Gifts of clothes and money for women and their babies were given alongside moral teachings. The beneficiaries of this largess at

Selly Oak were also expected to join the fortnightly Bible classes held there.[106] Humanitarianism and economics were not only tied inextricably with gratitude and servitude but the single mothers were expected to change their moral selves.

By 1906 the WMB advocated a new solution to the problem of workhouse single mothers. With the support of the WMB, Miss Helen Newill, a Poor Law Guardian, proposed a scheme for setting up a Home for unmarried mothers in Birmingham. Again one can see that gender and class assumptions played some role in its foundation. Concern was expressed that young first time 'offenders' mixed with the hardened and depraved characters who peopled the workhouse maternity wards. The WMB - and the Poor Law Guardians - wanted to ensure that single mothers did not fall totally from moral grace. And once again - just as in all the other organisations set up by these groups - the notion of the deserving poor predominated. It was believed that first offenders needed to be protected from the immorality of those who were considered to be hardened and irredeemable cases.[107]

> ...the committee have felt that for some long time their work has been very sadly handicapped for the want of a home to which these young girls might be sent, instead of mixing for long periods of time - as many often have to do - with the degraded and vicious women who haunt our workhouses all over the country...The moral atmosphere of a workhouse is such that no young girl should be introduced into it if we have any hope or wish to reclaim her.[108]

Economic considerations also played a significant part in the setting up of the Home. It was argued that a Home for single

mothers would be just as cheap as keeping single mothers in the workhouse. In the long term it was thought to be cheaper. Of course, this argument may have been used to convince other Poor Law Guardians who were less sympathetic to an increase in rates.

> We feel we shall do something towards reducing the rates if we can save these girls from coming back again. We have had cases where they have come back from five to ten times and the rates have had to keep the children.[109]

This was eventually realised when Hope Lodge was founded in 1910, one of the first homes for single mothers in England. From the following extract it seems that although there was a change in venue there was little change in ideology:

> The younger and more hopeful did not go first to the Workhouse, but went to Hope Lodge direct. There they were taught laundry work, house-work, cooking; as their confinement approached they were sent to the Infirmary, and returned with the baby to Hope Lodge, and were then taught the care and management of the baby. When the time came to leave - she wished they could be kept longer - the Matron found a situation for the mother and a home for the baby.[110]

Interestingly, in the 1920's Hope Lodge took over and replaced the Church of England and the Nonconformist reform homes.[111]

From the evidence outlined above, it appears that the WMB provides a good illustration of the contradictions inherent in preventive work. On the one hand, it was obviously motivated by a desire to save on the rates, punish immorality and instil bourgeois values. It also adopted a policy which distinguished between the deserving and undeserving poor. On the other hand the workhouse visitors were operating within a particularly

unsympathetic masculine context. The antagonism women Poor Law Guardians faced from their male colleagues on the Board of Guardians may well have acted as a restraint on their generosity. In the next part of this chapter, the third branch of the BLACPYG will be discussed: the training home for "wayward and troublesome" girls known as Summer Hill.

iii. Summer Hill[112]

Summer Hill was opened on July 1st 1884 at 67, Summer Hill by the BLACPYG to train "wayward and troublesome" girls for domestic service,[113] and offers a study of how the theory of the BLACPYG was put into practice. In many ways, Summer Hill replicated the philosophy and practice of the reform institutions previously examined. It certainly operated within a similarly gendered class framework,[114] as indicated by its admissions procedures, working patterns, educational policies and leisure activities.

The admission policy at Summer Hill rested on distinctions that were based on gender and class. Summer Hill operated similar selection criteria as that of the reform institutions examined earlier - and for similar reasons. A fairly rigid admission policy excluded many potential applicants. Only those financially[115] and morally eligible were admitted. Summer Hill did not admit those who were categorised as 'fallen' young women but only accepted those who were both young[116] and still perceived as 'innocent':

> for rough, untrained girls with serious faults of temper,

> veracity, cleanliness or modesty, under the age of eighteen, and 'unfallen' in the technical sense.[117]

Quite subtle distinctions were made between the different categories of young women. Applicants were categorised according to a hierarchy of respectability. The successful applicants were in the middle of the rescue, reform and preventive charitable pecking order. They were not deemed worthy enough to join the Girls' Friendly Society or the home at Bath House[118] which was for respectable young girls. Neither were they considered to be so morally deficient as to be sent to a Magdalen home. Instead, they were deemed to constitute a special category:

> They had felt how difficult it was to find any Home which would open its doors to girls whose habits of lying, thieving, dirt and laziness, etc, made them unfit subjects for an ordinary Training Home, and yet whose lives had not sunk to the level of the inmates of a Refuge, there was literally no place where they could be taught and trained....
>
> In the Training Home girls are received who are beyond the management of their parent or guardians, and are in urgent danger from evil influences and temptations.[119]

The type of young women described above was a potential danger to both themselves and the local community because prostitution was seen to be the next logical step. If left untrained or employed in unsuitable occupations such young women were a risk to the stability and security of the nation. By accepting young women into the Home, Summer Hill stopped the future supply of prostitutes and saved Birmingham, if not the nation, from moral disgrace.[120]

Accepting such unsociable young women did not challenge

contemporary middle class wisdom about the deserving and undeserving poor. On the contrary, it reinforced it. Like the young women in Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home the potential inmates to Summer Hill were perceived as victims which meant that they were not held responsible for their inadequate behaviour.[121] Instead, poor parenting was blamed. Troublesome behaviour was directly attributed to problem, or single parent, families where lack of discipline, intemperance, dishonesty and immorality were to be found. Consequently, assertive and 'wild' young women were accommodated and accepted at Summer Hill because unsatisfactory behaviour was not considered their fault. The vast majority of the young women who entered Summer Hill, throughout this entire period, were either from one parent families or were orphans and so fulfilled this criterion.[122] For example, in 1904 6 out of 19 girls were orphans and 12 were from single parent families. In 1907 16 out of 20 girls were from one parent families. Occasionally a young woman was brought to the institution by relatives but this was rare.[123] The following extract sums up the attitudes of the BLACPYG about poor parenting:

> Parents and guardians seem unwilling or unable to exercise proper control over even young children, so that they grow up with thoroughly lawless ideas. Whatever they want to do, they do regardless of consequences. If they covet anything they take it, whether it be money, jewellry, clothes, or another person's character. If they do not want to work they are idle...Two have drunken parents, who illtreat their children, and one girl was abetted in acts of dishonesty by her mother. Four girls are motherless, and the fathers, who are drunkards, refuse all responsibility. Five have no parents, so that practically all these nine have been brought up in some way - often a very questionable way - by friends or relatives. Three have immoral mothers; one has a paralysed and widowed mother, and five have respectable parents who are unable

to control them.[124]

Waywardness thus remained an individual and family problem rather than a structural one which had perhaps been exacerbated by the economic and social dislocation of industrialisation.

Once young women were admitted to the Home, parents relinquished responsibility for their offspring. Summer Hill allowed only limited access to parents or guardians who had to sign over all their authority to the Home:

> That the parents or guardians of girls entering the Home shall be required to sign a paper resigning all authority over them to the Committee of the Training Home.[125]

Parental authority was relegated to the Matron in charge who became **in loco parentis**. There was a certain contradiction here: on the one hand Summer Hill espoused family values but on the other they severed ties with the inmate's parents. This behaviour, of course, could be justified because the rejected parents had neglected their duties. In effect, it gave Summer Hill as strong a measure of control as that enjoyed in reform institutions. Friends and family were only allowed to visit every three months, and even then at specified times. No free access was given, even though this was a voluntary home:

> Relations or friends of Girls in the Home can only be allowed to visit them on the regular visiting day, which occurs on the first Wednesday in February, May, August and November, from 3 to 8 o'clock. These visits are not to exceed one hour.[126]

Once separated from their families - like the inmates of reform

institutions - the young women were encouraged to break with their working class past to be recast in a conventionally safe image. Summer Hill used this total control to induce conformity and to instil the moral code of the middle class.

Work at Summer Hill reaffirmed the young woman's class position. Work not only contributed to the income of Summer Hill but was the medium whereby young women were 'saved' from a first fall, checked in their moral attitudes, controlled in their behaviour and trained to be of useful service to their communities. But it was work conceived within the parameters of gender and class and to some extent illustrates the symbiotic relationship of these categories.

Summer Hill became yet another mechanism whereby selected young women were educated into the social mores of the middle class community - but without accruing the economic benefits of such a shift. It was an institution, like the Magdalen Asylum and Mrs Rogers' Home, which provided working class young women with the opportunity to train for work that was distinctly working class and learn a femininity that was definitely middle class:

> Here they are given a home, surrounded by good influences, controlled by a skilled matron, and taught housework, washing and the management of children, a creche being carried on at the home for this purpose. From the Home they are introduced into service.[127]

At no time did the Committee at Summer Hill wish to extend equal work opportunities to the inmates. Although some of the middle

class philanthropists were not impervious to current debates about female emancipation these ideas were not applied to Summer Hill. Emancipation must therefore have been perceived as a middle class monopoly which remained unavailable for working class women to enjoy. Some change occurred in that ill-educated, unskilled young women were trained for a specific job but there was little transformation in that their job opportunities were constrained by a particularly formidable gender and class ideology. At no time did Summer Hill raise the sights of working class young women beyond that of domestic service.[128] As a result of a failure to challenge the class (and unsurprisingly the sexual) division of labour, Summer Hill reinforced the gender and class specific nature of the occupational groups and enhanced the class and gendered status quo.

Alternatives were never offered to domestic service by the BLACPYG. According to Annual Reports, the only jobs available to young women were either factory work, street selling or domestic service. Factory work and street selling were viewed as occupations which encouraged immoral behaviour and were thus not recommended. Domestic service was perceived to be an attractive substitute for the two former occupations, despite the fact that it was often a dangerously sexual environment for some women.[129] There was no doubt in the minds of the Committees of both the reform and the preventive organisations that domestic service was the most appropriate occupation for working class women. Consequently, the allotted roles in life of women from Summer Hill were as lowly paid and unskilled workers if this speech

given by the Lord Mayor to the BLACPYG's Annual Meeting can be taken as read:

> There was an unfortunate prejudice among girls against domestic service. It was too easy to understand that the greater freedom of factory life was attractive to girls, but he did not think there could be any doubt that domestic service was better for them. If there was more give and take between mistress and maid there would probably be less reluctance to enter domestic service. He was glad to see that out of 1,840 children who had applied for licences only 121 were girls.[130] Some of them were able to withstand the exposure to the weather but on other ground than those of health it was undesirable that young girls should have to get their living in the streets. Mrs Ashley seconded the motion, and pointed out that the object of the association was not only to provide a home for domestic servants, but especially to take in hand those girls who were leading a very risky life.[131]

The above extract, on the face of it at least, suggests that Summer Hill advocated domestic service for humanitarian reasons. Domestic service was perceived as more congenial than other occupations because it fed, housed and cared for the workers it employed. However, Summer Hill - like the reform institutions - only referred to other opportunities available to working class women which contrasted, quite negatively, with domestic service. No mention was ever made of clerical or shop-work, both of which expanded in the late nineteenth century. Neither were inmates given training in masculine and/or middle class occupations.[132]

Indeed, Summer Hill may have offered training in domestic service precisely because by the end of the nineteenth century this occupational choice was being challenged by newer working class jobs which offered better opportunities. Complaints were voiced

by the middle class about the shortage of servants which might indicate that Summer Hill was training young women for employment in their own homes:[133]

> The question of the value of Training Homes for young girls, in which embryo servants can have a short practical initiation into the duties of domestic service. Population has of late years greatly increased, and the class of householder requiring the services of a young girl, known familiarly as a 'general' and in old-fashioned parlance as a 'maid of all work' has likewise largely increased.[134]

As suggested in the previous chapter, there were complex reasons why training in domestic service was emphasised and these applied as much to Summer Hill as to reform institutions. It has been argued that asylums provided a model for other forms of female institutions in that they established a clearly defined class and gendered environment.[135] However, even though such asylums did provide a paradigm for preventive institutions it is important not to generalise too much. Distinct differences emerged between one institution and another. These differences were perhaps as important as similarities, particularly for the individual inmate concerned. For instance, Summer Hill was a Home for prevention not for reform. Subtle gender distinctions were made between the inmates at the Magdalen Asylum, Mrs Rogers' Home and the inmates at Summer Hill which in turn led to differing expectations. The young women who were trained at Summer Hill were perceived to be a step up in the moral hierarchy - they were 'unfallen' and so the type of domestic service offered at Summer Hill differed from that at reform institutions.

For twenty five years this home has been receiving girls

> from evil and often vicious homes, providing them with proper food, healthy surroundings, and medical care, in addition to giving them a good training in every department of work necessary to fit them for domestic service.[136]

Slightly different factors therefore emerged for training women in domestic service, although these were still located within a gendered class framework. For instance, domestic service was seen as a preparation for marriage because it trained young women to be good wives and mothers:[137]

> ...could not understand why there should be such a prejudice amongst girls against domestic service for in no calling could a girl obtain such useful experience for her own home if she came to be married.[138]

In many ways this was an unrealistic expectation as managing a middle class household was hardly preparation for caring for a low income working class home. Nonetheless, there was an expectation at Summer Hill that ex-inmates would eventually get married and have children: a role not envisaged for the inmates of the Magdalen and Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home. Men, it was believed, preferred to marry women who had worked as domestic servants because they were able to cook, clean and look after children. Consequently young women from Summer Hill were regarded as a marketable commodity in the marriage trade. Furthermore, women with such a background could control potentially troublesome men, as husbands would prefer to stay at home in a well run household rather than go off to a pub:

> The girls were trained in housework and kitchen work; the kitchen was a very important factor in all kinds of social reform. If more girls really know how to treat the kitchen there would be less danger of their husbands going to

public houses.[139]

Only certain types of domestic service were considered suitable training for marriage.[140] Because the future role expectations of the reformed prostitute and the wayward young woman diverged, there were distinct differences in the training they received, and distinct differences in the type of domestic service they entered.

However wayward the young women at Summer Hill were thought to be, they had still not fallen off the sexual precipice into prostitution. As a result they were not expected to enter service at the bottom of the domestic mountain.[141] Young Summer Hill women were not required to do laundry work whereas it has been seen that it was the only training inmates received at reform institutions:

> Some of our friends may perhaps be inclined to think, that with so many girls we ought to manage a laundry, but we should like to point out to them, that the girls we receive are all young, mostly between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. They have had no training in any kind of household work whatever.[142]

The above quote suggests that age was the only criterion for spurning laundry work but other reasons perhaps also applied. Firstly, because the young women at Summer Hill were perceived as 'innocent' they did not have to be physically punished by working in the heavy laundries. Secondly, laundry work did not have the same symbolic function at Summer Hill as it did in the Magdalen Asylum: women were not expected to be reminded of the correlation between washing away dirt and washing away sin. Thirdly, laundry

work by itself could not prepare young women for marriage. The more sophisticated skills of cooking and child care were also necessary. Fourthly, family, friends and local authorities paid weekly fees or annual subscriptions to Summer Hill to support inmates. Laundry work was therefore not the same economic necessity it was in the Magdalen Asylum and Mrs Rogers' Home.[143] Finally, those contributing towards the upkeep of a young woman might have objected to their charges being trained in demeaning laundry work but there is no evidence to confirm this. As a result Summer Hill young women were 'trained' to be domestic servants in a middle class as opposed to an artisan home:

> For instance, so many of our young girls would make efficient servants if we could afford to send them to a Training Home for three months. They would then be eligible for a very different class of situation from those they are able to take without such training.[144]

Every young woman proceeded through each department - nursing, washing and housework. As well as this, they were taught to sew in both their working time and in their so called free time. The young women were expected to become skilled in each of these areas after a stay of approximately three months:[145]

> the girls were trained in every department of the association's work, the nursery, the laundry, the work room and the kitchen under a competent matron. Consequently, they were sent into domestic service with a thorough knowledge of what was required.[146]

Summer Hill was different from the reform institutions in that it offered nursery training.[147] Once again, there were a number of reasons for the creche's existence. The creche filled a local

need, provided suitable training in female skills and as the only self-financing element at Summer Hill raised a respectable income.[148]

Economic pragmatism played a large part in the management of the creche. Birmingham at this time had no municipal creche for working mothers so Summer Hill provided a Day Nursery where 'poor' mothers of the neighbourhood could leave their children.[149] This nursery was open from 7am-7pm and charged 4d per day for food and care. It was a small nursery as only approximately ten-sixteen children were looked after in the Home.[150]

In addition, the creche reinforced gender identity. The nursery provided job training in a traditional female role. It was work well suited to young women wishing to become either a children's nurse or in charge of children whilst in service.[151] Children, sometimes babies, were looked after by young women under the supervision of a Matron:

> ... babies are cared for by a certain number of the girl in the Home under the charge of a nurse specially chosen for this work, who devotes all her time to it. These little ones receive every attention, being bathed every day, kept clean, happy, and amused, and taken for a walk always once, sometimes twice in the day.[152]

Creche work also acted as a mechanism for behaviour modification. Looking after children was intended to soften and humanise even truculent young women:

> We find our creche a wonderful help in drawing out the best qualities of our girls, and it is pleasant to notice that however naughty and selfish they are the greater

> number at any rate have love to spare for these little ones.[153]

Creche work was undoubtedly the preferred choice of young women at Summer Hill. It was believed to be the most popular branch of work as inmates found "much pleasure and profit in learning how to wash, dress and feed the little ones, while the daily walk benefits young nurses and babies alike". The popularity of the creche could have been because the young women were giving the children what they themselves needed: love and attention. It may have been because other work within Summer Hill was tedious, repetitive and physically demanding whereas looking after small children was rewarding, pleasurable and emotionally fulfilling.

The creche also provided a model of middle class child-care for the mothers of both the present and future generations. It was an educative experience for the mothers who left their children in the creche for it was believed that mothers benefited from seeing good middle class childcare in practice:

> Many friends may have seen the procession of girls in uniform with their charges in perambulators making their way through the crowded streets of the City. The work of the Creche is not only a means of training the girls, it is also a means in many cases of educating the mothers of the babies.[154]

In training young women in the creche Summer Hill was also laying down desirable habits of child rearing - "they had much cause for rejoicing in the fact that they were training good mothers for a future generation".[155]

The work offered to young women at Summer Hill was thus quite

The work offered to young women at Summer Hill was thus quite different to that of the reform institutions. Nevertheless the type of work that was available expressed the class and gender roles favoured by the middle class. There can be no doubt that domestic service acted both symbolically, in that it reinforced ideas of a gendered class, and as a practical reality in that it provided a job. From 1887, when Summer Hill was founded, up until 1914 no attempts were made to challenge this monolithic orthodoxy.

Education reinforced these values. The BLACPYG managers, like those of the LACFG, did not seem to share the feminist belief that new educational opportunities provided the key to other forms of emancipation, at least for the working class. Instead, the educational aims of Summer Hill reinforced the status quo. Education centred on a modified version of the three R's: reading, writing and religion.[156] As such, both class patterns and gender roles were reinforced. Young women were given education that neither took them above their station in life nor forced them to challenge societal values. Classes were held each week to help the young women learn to read and write - but inmates were never taught more than basic literacy.[157] In addition, lessons in religion and morality were intended to shape their ideas on feminine behaviour.

> The girls although over school age when admitted to the home, were not often up to the average of that age, and classes to remedy this and awaken their interest were successfully held.[158]

conjuror, were considered appropriate entertainments.[178] No rough and tumble plays, or musical hall entertainments were ever considered or indeed mentioned. Entertainment, as in Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home, was that of a typical middle class Victorian or Edwardian drawing room. These treats were carefully orchestrated to ensure that correct moral values were reinforced. At these annual events prizes were given to young women who had remained in service for longer than a year. From 1894 additional prizes were given to those who had saved the most money and from 1902 to those who had sewn the neatest garments.[179]

Once again this provides an excellent example of the way in which the categories of class and gender shifted according to circumstance. Both work and leisure were defined by gender and class. For instance, inmates were given limited training for a working class occupation but offered leisure which was middle class. There was thus little difference between both the work and the leisure pursuits on offer at Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home and at Summer Hill, probably because the same set of women organised both. And just as working class work was considered appropriate, (for both women at Mrs Rogers' Home and at Summer Hill) working class leisure was not.

After care reflected a similar blend of humanitarianism mixed with gender and class control. It was also influenced by Hopkins' ideas. In her pamphlet on preventive work, Hopkins recommended that an outfit should be advanced to young women on

(as with the inmates of the reform institutions) a waste of time to educate them beyond their station. Whereas middle class philanthropists like Mrs Cadbury had enjoyed a challengingly academic education at prestigious schools, the inmates of Summer Hill were given no such choice. Increased educational opportunities elsewhere were not available at Summer Hill. Effectively, the social upshot of the decision to limit educational opportunity was to curtail job prospects.

Furthermore, the BLACPYG was explicit in its determination to instil the correct moral values into the inmates at Summer Hill. In this they were at one with the teachings of Ellice Hopkins:

> Teach them plainly, that from the crown of their heads to the soles of their feet their bodies belong to Christ; that they must never defile them with dirty talk or dirty words; never allow rough lads to pull them about, or be rude to them, or write nasty letters to them; never to answer any strange man who speaks to them in the street; never to go with any man to a public house.[163]

Emphasis was placed on the importance of moral standards as a means by which to regulate society. Physical, moral and religious education became the mechanisms whereby these values were to be inculcated. Physical exercise classes were held.[164] In 1907 drilling classes were instituted by Mrs Stanbury and Mrs Miller but these were discontinued in 1912 because of the parlous state of the wooden floor.[165] During the summer months of 1913 a weekly swimming lesson was held at Monument Road Baths.[166] Physical education was considered beneficial in a number of ways. It was a healthy pursuit and converted youthful enthusiasm

and energy into discipline and order. Parallels were also drawn between a clean healthy body and a clean healthy mind.[167]

Spiritual and moral guidance also played a large part in the educative process. Each Sunday afternoon a Bible class was held to which young women already in service were also invited to attend. In 1913 28 girls were confirmed and presented with an illustrated Testament by Miss Williams. In 1912 White Ribbon Bands were formed within Summer Hill to encourage Temperance and Purity among the girls.[168] This emphasis on basic education, religion and morality characterised the motives of the BLACPYG which attempted to fit young women into the gender and class role allotted to them at birth.

Appropriate forms of womanly behaviour - namely behaviour which was subdued, submissive and assiduous - were rewarded at every opportunity. To encourage good conduct a new scheme of rewards was instituted in 1908. Daily marks for conduct and neatness were recorded for each young woman. Silver shield brooches engraved with the motto 'Forward' were awarded each month to those who had reached high moral goals. Once the medal had been won three times it became the property of the inmate.[169] Such a scheme strengthened the gender and class roles taught at Summer Hill by rewarding - and thus setting as an example - those who were successful.

Recreation for the most part was an exceptional treat, rarely

taken and often - like the reform institutions - with an educational purpose in mind. In 1895 sewing and needlework were introduced as leisure activities with prizes promised, and distributed, the following year for those who produced the best work.[170] Some of these items were put up for sale. Inmates in 1904 earned £43 19s 6d for the Home from various articles they had sewn. In 1908, viewed as a highly satisfactory year for sewing, 634 garments including 95 dresses were made.[171] However, there was a certain paradox - as with Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home - with respect to many of the leisure activities. On the one hand, the inmates of Summer Hill had their class roles confirmed in their educational and working lives, whereas on the other hand they were initiated into middle class leisure. Where they were trained in working class occupations and taught their rightful place in the occupational spectrum, the young women in Summer Hill were given access to a different middle class world of leisure. This may have been because if women were expected to work in middle class homes they needed to be more sedate and dignified but there is no evidence to substantiate this.

Most leisure pursuits were sober, polite excursions to the country houses of benefactors where young women, because of their surroundings, undoubtedly behaved appropriately and may well have been intimidated by the conspicuous wealth that they saw.[172] Every year from 1887 to 1914, garden parties were held in the homes and grounds of committee members.[173] Miss Wilson, Miss Stacey, Mrs Brooks, amongst others, all offered hospitality to the young women. The Wilson house and gardens was a popular venue

in that it was also offered to the young women living in Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home.

Excursions to Sutton Park, the Lickey Hills and Stratford were also organised.[174] These trips, just as the ones organised for the inmates at Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home, were carefully selected either because they were healthy or edifying. Occurring only once or twice a year trips to places such as Stratford were cleverly mixed so that a journey on the steam boat was taken alongside an educational tour of Shakespeare's graveyard. Certain important historical occasions were also celebrated, thus reinforcing correct cultural values. Queen Victoria's Jubilee Procession, for instance, was viewed from benefactors' windows followed by 'high tea' at the Home.[175] It is difficult to know how gendered these leisure activities were as there was a strong tradition of paternalistic factory owners providing similar treats for their workforce.[176]

As well as these well controlled excursions, an annual party was held around the Christmas period. At these events, benefactors demonstrated their own theatrical skills by entertaining both the other inmates and those who returned for the festive celebrations. "the girls greatly enjoying the sight of two ladies so well known to them appearing in altogether different guise and character."[177] Magic lantern shows from 1888, musical entertainments, recitations and dramatic adaptations of worthwhile novels such as George Eliot's works, and in 1904 a

conjuror, were considered appropriate entertainments.[178] No rough and tumble plays, or musical hall entertainments were ever considered or indeed mentioned. Entertainment, as in Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home, was that of a typical middle class Victorian or Edwardian drawing room. These treats were carefully orchestrated to ensure that correct moral values were reinforced. At these annual events prizes were given to young women who had remained in service for longer than a year. From 1894 additional prizes were given to those who had saved the most money and from 1902 to those who had sewn the neatest garments.[179]

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leaving the institution. At Summer Hill young women were provided with an outfit worth about £2 10s before they left.[180] As Hopkins had recommended, this outfit[181] was not given free of charge but had to be repaid from earnings. This financial debt linked young women firmly to Summer Hill until it was repaid and gave Summer Hill a direct measure of control over those who had left their formal jurisdiction.[182] Until the debt was discharged young women were not allowed to visit their relatives and friends or receive visits from them at the Home. Holidays had to be taken at Summer Hill. The Matron, supported by other volunteers, visited the girls in their places of work every month to allegedly advise and encourage them, and occasionally to report on their conduct to the committee.[183] In addition, each Thursday evening ex-trainees were received, in rotation, as visitors to the Home, "where tea is provided and the visitors are met by one of the ladies of the Committee, who do their best to make these evenings attractive and useful."[184]

The inmates of Summer Hill, however, did not always aspire to the class and gendered role allotted to them. Summer Hill was not an ineluctable institution. Each year two or three young women (out of about twenty inmates) absconded but many more proved troublesome within the Home.[185] There were constant problems in disciplining and controlling recalcitrant youngsters which shows that control mechanisms and authority did not always work. When persuasion failed, subtle threats were used to bring youngsters into line. This, of course, challenges - but perhaps does not destroy - the interpretation that the philanthropists were

motivated by humanitarian principles, although they may well have argued that the threats outlined below were for the young woman's own good.

> One of these was very difficult to manage at first. For several days she refused to eat properly, to do any work, or join in any games with the other girls...she repelled with the utmost rudeness any attempt at kindness...one of the ladies of the Committee saying to her...that she could not possibly be in her right mind...and that perhaps an asylum was the right place for her...the next day the girl had, for the first time, spoken nicely.[186]

If measures such as those above proved to be unsuccessful, young women were packed off elsewhere, either to the local workhouse or back to their local Union. For instance in 1894 one was returned to Stourbridge Union because of very violent conduct:

> One very idle girl has been sent for a time to the workhouse, where the master has kindly undertaken to see that she has plenty of hard work to do and we hope this discipline may prove salutary.[187]

Similarly, when there was resistance to the rules after young women had left, the Committee at Summer Hill exercised a strict control. Young women regularly absconded from their employers, sometimes stole their money and goods and proved to be unreliable and ill disciplined. Particularly troublesome young women - just like the women in Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home - were unceremoniously sent to the colonies to start a new life:

> Another girl who had throughout been a most troublesome case, recently stole some money from her mistress and ran away to Bristol, but was returned to us by the people to whom she went. We feel there is no real chance of her leading an honest life here, so as a last resource and

> with the full consent of her father and of a lady who has been interested in her for many years, we have resolved to emigrate her, and she is to start next month for Australia with two other of our old girls, who have caused great anxiety and for whom removal from their present environment seems the wisest thing.[188]

or perhaps more importantly to cease to be a burden to the mother country:[189]

> the third <inmate of three inmates sent to the colonies> is not quite so satisfactory but we feel it is better for her to be there than in England.[190]

Nevertheless, many young women conformed to middle class expectations. According to Annual Reports, the conduct of most of those sent to service was good. Young women paid back most of the money advanced to them and by 1903 only one out of 126 girls had 'fallen' in six and a half years which proved, to the Committee, that prevention worked:

> The Committee desire to state that many girls do better when they are sent out. Some need the stimulus of earning money, and of the feeling that they are getting on, others who are very quarrelsome behave quite differently when they find themselves to a certain extent mistress of their own kitchen, and do fairly well in service when they have been very troublesome in the Home.[191]

However, some of the claims made by the Committee however were a little fanciful. Councillor Bishop drew attention at the Annual Meeting of 1891 to what he considered to be the diminution of crime which we attributed to the BLACPYG. "He said there were other indications leading one to hope that there had been a similar decrease of immorality: one being a quickening of public opinion in the matter, and a marked improvement in the moral tone

of the House of Commons".[192]

Although there are no figures to prove or disprove Councillor Bishop's remark, it is impossible to believe that such a small organisation as the BLACPYG - and the Summer Hill Home - had such a great effect on the nation. Summer Hill, as the physical manifestation of the philosophy of the BLACPYG, attempted to prevent prostitution at source by moulding young women into a gendered identity which was affected by class. In many ways they were successful but equally there was some resistance to their gendered class definitions. In the next chapter the GNS will be discussed as another example of the tension between gender and class and will provide a further instance of how female solidarity was undermined by such ambiguities.

Notes and References

(1) Originally the BLACPYG was divided into five sections, the Petitioning, the Care of Neglected Children, the Moral Educational Branch, the Workhouse Magdalen Branch and the Home. The first two sections lapsed quite quickly because other agencies were already involved in this type of work. For instance, the BMCVA, as mentioned in Chapter Five, were engaged in petitioning.

(2) These three branches worked in unison until 1896 when the BLACPYG underwent a structural metamorphosis. The WMB seceded from the main organisation, followed by a reorganisation of the MEB. Despite these organisational changes the rest of the WMB withdrew in 1904 to continue as a separate organisation, followed by the collapse of the Snowdrop Bands in 1906, the only part left of the MEB. From 1906 only Summer Hill remained. (BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1898.)

(3) The National Union of Women Workers, an umbrella organisation which established links between the disparate groups of women philanthropists, originated with the BLACPYG. (NUWW Quarterly Magazine, 1892, passim.)

(4) BMCVA Occasional Paper, July 1887.

(5) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, December 1892, p3.

(6) E Hopkins, How to Start Preventive Work, Hatchards, 1884.

(7) Hopkins held a catholic view of preventive work, arguing that it took many different forms. It encompassed teaching sons reverence for womanhood and treating servants respectfully. Her own preventive work, however, was targeted at those perceived to be in direct sexual danger. (E Hopkins, How to Start Preventative Work, 1884, pp5-6.)

(8) E Hopkins, How to Start Preventive Work, 1884, p8.

(9) See R Barrett, Ellice Hopkins: a memoir, Wells Gardner, 1907 for an overview of the life of Hopkins.

(10) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, December 1892, p3.

(11) This could have been due to the fact that whereas the LACFG was a reform organisation, the BLACPYG was a preventive one.

(12) See Appendix 1 for further details.

(13) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, December 1892, p21.

(14) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1890.

(15) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(16) See Appendix 1 for further details.

(17) Society of Friends Minute Books of Women's Monthly Meetings, April 7th 1903.

(18) Feminists were questioning the nature of marriage at this time. Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy, for instance, argued that marriage was legalised prostitution. (L Bland, "The Married Woman, the 'New Woman' and the Feminist: Sexual Politics of the 1890s" in J Rendall, Equal or Different, 1987, pp141-164.)

(19) A number of reasons may be suggested. Firstly, the resignation in 1896 of the MEB's very active and influential Secretary, Mrs Hallowes, may have contributed, secondly the formation of alternative Mothers' Unions may have made the MEB redundant, thirdly the collapse of the BMCVA at about the same time might suggest either that the MEB could not survive without them or that the demise of both meant that the working class of Birmingham was not interested in having moral reform imposed from above.

(20) Snowdrop Bands, set up for young women, proved to be the most successful of the MEB's enterprises but even then numbers were small. In 1891 Snowdrop Bands had enrolled 1,000, by 1892 1,400,

and by 1893 there were 19 Bands in Birmingham. By 1894 these numbers decreased as only 15 Bands with between 30-60 members were in operation. This decreased further in 1897 when only 8 Bands existed with a total of about 350. This further declined in 1898 when membership dropped to 240. Despite this, the organisers continued to be optimistic about the success of the Snowdrop Bands and even began a Snowdrop magazine in 1900.(BLACPYG Annual Reports,1891-1904.)

(21) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1892, p12.

(22) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1888, p8.

(23) Mrs Lance, The Teacher's Responsibility in Creating and Sustaining a High Moral Standard in the Class, 1880, p4.

(24) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(25) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, September 1891, p3.

(26) Mothers' Meetings were not a BLACPYG invention. F Prochaska, "A Mother's Country: Mothers' Meetings and Family Welfare in Britain, 1850-1950", History, Number 74, 1989, p380, claims that it is difficult to put a precise date on the first Mothers' Meeting' but has suggested that the earliest was set up by Elizabeth Twining in London around 1850. Ellen Ranyard expanded Mothers' Meetings in the late 1850's and is often viewed as the 'real' inventor. In 1876, Mary Sumner founded the Mothers' Union proper. Membership of these groups rose to over 400,000 by 1920.

(27) F Prochaska also claims that the Mothers' Meetings were ultimately unsuccessful in breaking down class barriers. (F Prochaska, "A Mothers' Country: Mothers' Meetings and Family Welfare in Britain, 1850-1950", 1989, pp389-399.)

(28) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, March 1892, p21.

(29) Drawing room meetings were regular events. In 1887 Miss Emily Janes spoke at thirty Drawing Room meetings in Edgbaston alone. Such meetings were probably regarded as recruitment meetings because several women joined the MEB after each one. (BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1900.)

(30) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1892, p11.

(31) Mothers in Council were originated by the MEB but soon became self-supporting and independent under the management of Mrs Godlee. (BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1892.)

(32) These organisations only lasted a couple of years. After 1892 no mention was made of them in the Annual Reports so it is difficult to assess whether they developed into an autonomous organisation or died out completely and why.

(33) The Friend, May 1st 1914.

(34) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, 1891.

(35) Mothers' Unions did not remain long under the MEB's moral umbrella. In 1892 this work was taken up by Mrs Perowne, wife of the Bishop of Worcester, who was associated with the Magdalen Asylum. By 1894 the local branch numbered over 1,600 women and was known as the Birmingham branch of Worcester Diocesan Mothers' Union. By 1906 numbers had increased to 3,926. When the local branch formally joined with the Anglican Diocese the MEB ceased to be formally involved although Mrs Phillp still played a significant role. This indicates that religion, as opposed to class, kept middle class women apart. (BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1892-1914; Mothers Union Leaflet, 1907-1914.)

(36) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1896.

(37) Snowdrop Bands were founded largely through the efforts of Mrs Wycliffe Wilson who had been inspired by the methods and practice of the Sheffield Snowdrop Band. (NUWW Quarterly Magazine, September 1991.)

(38) Two separate Bands, one for girls from eleven to fourteen, the second from fourteen upwards were formed. Members were divided into Junior and Senior sections under the leadership of an older woman.

(39) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1891-1914.

(40) After consultation with a member of the School Board, Miss Kenrick, 300 school mistresses who worked in Board Schools were invited to a meeting. As a result, Snowdrop Bands were formed in many schools, notably Christchurch, St George's Day Schools and Sunday schools, Dudley Road Board, Brookfields Board, Gem Street Board, Soho Road Board, Nelson Street Board, Severn Street Board, Windsor Street Board, St Lukes Day School, Monument Road Factory Class, Francis Road Bible Class, Wednesday Evening Class, Birchfields. There was, however, no mention of the Snowdrop Bands in the Birmingham School Board Annual Reports.

(41) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1894, p9.

(42) NUWW Conference, November 1890, p24.

(43) Society of Friends Minute Books of Women's Monthly Meetings, March 9th, 1909.

(44) Society of Friends Minute Books of Women's Monthly Meetings, 1880-1914.

(45) F Prochaska has noted that dress-making was a common activity at Mothers' Meetings. Dress making was popular with working class mothers because materials were supplied at cost price. (F Prochaska, "A Mother's Country: Mothers' Meetings and Family Welfare in Britain, 1850-1950", 1989, p387.)

(46) Society of Friends Minute Books of Women's Monthly Meetings, April 7th, 1903.

(47) See L Bland, "'Purifying' the Public World: feminist vigilantes in late Victorian England", 1992, pp397-412 for a discussion of the tensions within the social purity movement.

(48) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1903.

(49) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, June 1891.

(50) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(51) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, December 1891, p5.

(52) School Boards in other cities and towns such as Barnsley also purchased the lessons for use in their schools. Apparently 200 copies were purchased by School Boards in other parts of the country. (BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1903.)

(53) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, June 1891, p10.

(54) Miss Nunneley, NUWW Annual Conference, 1890, p23.

(55) Of course, many working class people would have subscribed to a similar moral code. See C Chinn, They Worked All Their Lives, 1991, pp144-146 for a fuller discussion of working class morality in Birmingham.

(56) This fear was widespread amongst some of the middle class. See C Chinn, They worked All Their Lives, 1991, p98 for some Birmingham examples. One of the explanations for the spread of the use of contraception amongst the factory workers was that women exchanged information on the shop floor. See A McLaren, Birth Control in Nineteenth Century England, Holmes and Meier, 1978, pp215-231 for a discussion of birth control and the working class in England.

(57) Working class married women may have viewed this differently. On the contrary, married women's so-called loose talk might have served an educative function, inducting young women into sexual matters which they might have been reluctant to discuss with their mothers.

(58) The "reasonable cause to believe" clause enabled those prosecuted to claim that they believed the girl to be over sixteen.

(59) The time limit was initially three months. In 1904 it was extended to six months and in 1928 to twelve months. Prosecutions had to be brought within these limits. See C Hooper, "Child sexual abuse and the regulation of women", in C Smart, Regulating Women, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1992, pp53-75 for a discussion of the history of child sexual abuse.

(60) Incest was criminalised in 1908.

(61) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1896, p9.

(62) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1896, p9.

(63) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1896, p10.

(64) As Mort suggests this was not an easy task. There was a definite clash of culture between the somewhat patrician M.P.'s and the less well born members of the NVA. (F Mort, Dangerous Sexualities, 1987, pp126-134.) These tensions may not have arisen in Birmingham because of the political strength of the ruling Nonconformist clique.

(65) The MEB did not prosecute sexual abusers or men who wrote and distributed indecent literature. This may have been because they lacked the power to do so. Alternatively, it may have been because the BMCVA were already pursuing a fairly robust prosecution policy.

(66) Helen Newill, Minutes of Evidence, Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1909, p402.

(67) Initially the WMB consisted only of the Birmingham section which worked with the King's Norton, Aston, and from 1888, the Selly Oak and Solihull parishes. In 1890, largely through the effort of Anna Lloyd, the West Bromwich section was established. This worked with women belonging to the parishes of Handsworth, West Bromwich, Wednesbury and in 1893, Oldbury. In 1895 at the invitation of several Walsall ladies Miss Lloyd, Mrs Phillp and the Secretary went to Walsall to attend a Drawing Room meeting at Mrs Slater's for the purpose of starting a similar branch in Walsall.(BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.)

(68) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1897, p19.

(69) See P Hollis, Ladies Elect, Clarendon, 1987, pp267-271 for a discussion of the role of women Guardians in the rescue of unmarried mothers, nationally.

(70) R Kunzel argues that professional women took over the work of philanthropic women. The shift from charity workers to paid professionals in social welfare , she claims, caused tensions between the two groups. Eventually the paid professional approach dominated. (R Kunzel, Fallen Women, Problem Girls, 1993.)

(71) For example Mrs Ashford, Mrs Barbara Rabone, Agatha Stacey, Anna Lloyd, Mrs Kenrick and Mrs Bracey were all PLG's who belonged to the BLACPYG. Hannah Cadbury, another PLG, helped collect money for the BLACPYG. (Englishwoman's Review, 1890-1900; BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1891-1914.)

(72) It proved difficult to obtain the actual numbers of male Guardians. However in 1885 only one woman out of 43 men attended

the January meeting in Birmingham. (Birmingham Board of Guardian Minutes, 1885.) In the same year, one woman out of 17 men attended the Kings Norton meeting. (Kings Norton Board of Guardian Minutes, 1885.)

(73) Largely as a result of her endeavours, single mothers were dealt with by women Guardians helped by volunteers from the WMB.

(74) NUWW Conference, 1911.

(75) P Hollis, Ladies Elect, 1987, pp211.

(76) The Englishwoman's Review, which probably received its information from Anna Lloyd, records:

> For the first time a lady is returned as guardian for West Bromwich. This is Miss Anna Lloyd, who was elected at the head of the poll. The importance of this victory is very marked, for there has hitherto been great opposition to having any woman on the Board. (Englishwoman's Review, 1888, p223.)

Mrs C E Mathews also pointed out that the Solihull Board of Guardians also objected to women Poor Law Guardians. (Englishwoman's Review, February 15th, 1888, p98.)

(77) Anna Lloyd, A Memoir, 1837-1925, Cayme Press, 1928.

(78) Mrs Bracey, Poor Law Conference, 1906-7, p25.

(79) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, December 1892, p10.

(80) BMCVA Occasional Paper, July 1887, p2.

(81) P Thane, "Women and the Poor Law in Victorian and Edwardian England", History Workshop Journal, Autumn, 1978, p39.

(82) R Kunzel draws attention to the need by the American authorities to contain the sexuality of single mothers. (R Kunzel, Fallen Women, Problem Girls, 1993.)

(83) See C Smart, Regulating Womanhood, 1992, for a discussion of marriage as a form of control over women.

(84) BMCVA Occasional Paper, July 1887, p2.

(85) The incarceration of 'feeble-minded' single mothers will be the subject of Chapter Eight.

(86) Englishwoman's Review, April 15th 1892, p110.

(87) The Birmingham workhouse was certainly not full of prostitutes. In 1891 the majority of inmates were over 60 years of age and many were in their 70's. (Census Returns, 1891.)

(88) Pat Thane has demonstrated that the values and attitudes of the PLAA 1834 were still held in later Victorian and Edwardian England. ("Women and the Poor Law in Victorian and Edwardian England", 1978, pp39-44.)

(89) Not all Poor Law officials subscribed to these definitions. The notion of the deserving poor prompted Sophia Lonsdale, Member of the Central Poor Law Commission to say:- "Will some one here kindly tell us once and for all the exact meaning of that blessed word 'deserving'; because 'deservingness' is so very vague. What do the people to whom it applied 'deserve' and why do they 'deserve' it? and can one human being ascertain exactly what another human being 'deserves'? (NUWW Annual Conference, 1910)

(90) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, December 1892, pp10-11.

(91) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, December 1892, p10.

(92) See P Thane, "Women and the Poor Law in Victorian and Edwardian England", 1978 pp28-51 and P Hollis, Ladies Elect, 1987, pp267-271, for a discussion of the treatment of single mothers in workhouses.

(93) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1896, p18. There may have been more pit-brow workers in the 1890's because the attempts to stop them working on the pit-brow may have led to some economic insecurity. Wednesbury, near Birmingham, employed pit-brow women. See A V John, By the Sweat of Their Brow, Croom Helm, 1980 for a discussion of the attempts to stop women working on the pit-brow and the campaigns by women to fight for their right to work.

(94) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(95) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1892.

(96) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, March 1892, p14.

(97) P Hollis, Ladies Elect, 1987, p269.

(98) Englishwoman's Review, July 14th 1888, p324.

(99) Helen Newill, Minutes of Evidence, Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1909, p402.

(100) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1888.

(101) Approximately 41 men were charged with 'bastardy' between 1899-1900 and asked to pay maintenance fees of about 1s-3s a week. It is not known whether these prosecutions were as a result of the WMB's influence. (Register of the Court of Summary Jurisdiction, 1899-1900.)

(102) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, December 1892, p11.

(103) First of all, mothers paid 4s for an affiliation summons, next they had to prove their case in court, obtain an order for support and pay another 12s before the order was served on the reluctant father. A month was allowed before these orders could be enforced leaving the man sufficient time to abscond. (BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.)

(104) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1888.

(105) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1892.

(106) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1892.

(107) Women Guardians throughout England shared the same concern. See P Hollis, Ladies Elect, 1989, p269-270.

(108) Helen Newill, Minutes of Evidence, Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1909, p402.

(109) Helen Newill, Minutes of Evidence, Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1909, p403.

(110) NUWW Annual Conference, 1911, p31.

(111) Only the Annual Reports from 1919 have survived for Hope Lodge. In 1919 it was a charitable institution, with a mixed gender Committee and a male President. Young women were expected to stay in the Home for at least four months, leaving their babies there for up to two years. When it merged with the Magdalen Asylum it agreed to take on board its ideology and to appoint Church of England clergy as Chaplain. When it took over Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home in 1921 it ran a very different institution with a separate Committee and finances. (Association for the Care and Training of Unmarried Mothers and their Babies, Annual Report, 1921) This new institution was more like a hostel where unmarried mothers could leave their babies and go out daily to domestic service.

(112) Ellice Hopkins provided the inspiration for the foundation of Summerhill but Agatha Stacey was responsible for putting her theory into practice. (NUWW Occasional Paper, February, 1910.)

(113) Initially Summer Hill consisted of a main house in which girls were trained for service. A few years later, an adjoining house was used as a temporary home for those already in service. The original Home accommodated about 18-20 young women who were taught the rudiments of domesticity. The second home accommodated about eight young women, two of whom managed the house and six who were either changing situations or spending their holidays at the Home. Two lodgers, who rented rooms in the second house were looked after by one of the young women from the Training Home who was next on the list for a job in domestic service.

(114) Philanthropic homes predated official ones. During the 1890's local councils began to establish schools for domestic

servants. See P Horn, "The Education and Employment of working class girls, 1870-1914", History of Education, Volume 17, 1988 for a discussion of the domestication of working class young women.

(115) Unlike the reform institutions it was not a free, at the point of delivery, service. A payment of 3/6d a week was required by the girls family or the Union to support the inmate. It must be assumed that only some working class families could afford to pay. Many of the young women were recommended by Poor Law Guardians so it can be assumed that women were paid for by the Union. Other inmates were paid for by ladies interested in them. Agatha Stacey paid the rent for Summer Hill.

(116) Summer Hill accepted young women between the ages of 12-18.

(117) This was probably a euphemism for virginal. NUWW Quarterly Magazine, December 1892, p6.

(118) Bath House had been set up in Birmingham to train young, more 'respectable' girls for domestic service. In many ways it mirrored Summer Hill except that its clientele was different.

(119) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1897, p6.

(120) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(121) See M Cale, Saved from a Life of Vice and Crime: Reformatory and Industrial Schools for Girls, c1854-c1901, D. Phil, Oxford, 1993, for a discussion of this in relation to industrial schools for girls.

(122) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(123) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(124) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1905.

(125) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887, Rule 4.

(126) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1896, p24.

(127) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1897, p6.

(128) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(129) See P Horn, The Rise and Fall of the Domestic Servant, Alan Sutton, 1990 for a discussion of domestic service.

(130) The Lord Mayor was referring to licenses for street vending. Hawking was deemed to be an unsuitable occupation for young women because of its association with prostitution.

(131) Lord Mayor, NUWW Quarterly Magazine, June 1905, p7.

(132) See C Chinn, They Worked All Their Lives, 1988 and G Barnsby, Birmingham Working People, Integrated Publishing Services, 1989 for an overview of the occupational opportunities open to working class women at this time.

(133) F Prochaska has suggested that the shortage of servants in the late nineteenth century played a part in middle class women's interest in some forms of philanthropy. (F Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy in 19th Century England, 1980, p148.) See also P Horn, The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant, 1990.

(134) NUWW Annual Conference, 1890, p64.

(135) See S Cohen, The Evolution of Women's Asylums since 1500, 1992 for a discussion of this.

(136) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1907, p7.

(137) F Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy in 19th Century England, 1981, p148 has claimed that the skills of a wife were not all that different from the skills of servant, according to many philanthropists.

(138) Birmingham Gazette and Express, March 4th 1905.

(139) Birmingham Daily Post, March 12th 1914, p3.

(140) Domestic service had its own hierarchy. At the very bottom were the 'slaveys,' or maids of all trades which the women from the asylums would undoubtedly be, through to the butler who was at the top of the domestic pecking order. Similarly there were differences between the maid of all work who was the only servant in a lower class household and one who worked in a wealthy home. A prosperous household employed many servants who had distinct duties and specialist skills. The kitchen maid, the parlour maid, the ladies' maid, the children's nurse, the cook, the housekeeper would all be part of a complex below stairs regime. For the sole servant of an artisan family it was much simpler: all of the household tasks from cleaning the grate, to cooking the food, heaving buckets of coal, carrying children and fetching laden jugs of water would be performed by one person. See P Horn, The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant, 1990.

(141) This superior training may have been to little avail. F Prochaska, has argued that young women from charitable institutions were usually employed in artisan families for extremely low wages - often just a few shillings a week. (F Prochaska,Women and Philanthropy in 19th Century England, 1981, p151.)

(142) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1898, p8.

(143) Nevertheless, Summer Hill still experienced financial problems. There were some attempts to change the working pattern in order to improve this. In 1893 it was suggested that the young

women engage in more profitable work. Examples were given of successful work in Leeds institutions which had bought knitting machines for their inmates to use. Similarly, inmates at Arrowfield Top had earned 2s 8d per week making rugs for sale. This suggestion, however, never came to fruition. (BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.)

(144) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, September 1907, p77.

(145) Ellice Hopkins outlined the principles of each Home: "It ought to hold from eight to twelve girls ... we do not as a rule keep them for more than three months - enough to teach them the rudiments of service - how to clean floors, grates, plates, to boil potatoes, and prepare a simple meal, some instruction in washing and needlework, and some moral and religious influence." (E Hopkins, How to Start Preventive Work, Hatchards, 1884, p9.)

(146) Birmingham Daily Post, February 25th 1904. Most of the work at Summer Hill was for internal consumption, not for sale. The housework, cooking, washing and ironing involved in caring for others in the Home was sufficient to keep young women meaningfully occupied. In many ways, Summer Hill was more of a replica of the 'real world' than the reform institutions as women were expected to become skilled in a wider range of jobs. It was rather similar to working in a well regulated mansion - the main difference being that the clients were the inmates.

(147) The nursery developed over the years of Summer Hill's existence. Initially the nursery had been the young women's evening dining room which was not deemed satisfactory. In 1887 a new nursery was built. As a result the larger, brighter nursery became increasingly popular among local parents. (BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(148) For example the creche at Summer Hill raised a sum of £39 17s 5d out of an income of £1,042 13s 4d in 1890. (BLACPYG Annual Report, 1890.)

(149) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1887.

(150) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1888.

(151) P Horn has shown that lower middle class families would often employ a nurse maid to look after their children. The job of the maid would be to dress the children, play with them and take them for walks. Nannies were only employed in richer establishments. (P Horn, The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Servant, 1990, p76.)

(152) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1906.

(153) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1906, p8.

(154) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1910, p6.

(155) Birmingham Daily Post, March 10th 1909, p3.

(156) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(157) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(158) Birmingham Daily Post, March 14th 1913, p3.

(159) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(160) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1888.

(161) Miss Whitlock, Miss Banks, Miss Beatrice Banks, Miss Wilson and Miss Youngerman were amongst them. (BLACPYG Annual Report, 1904)

(162) See P Horn, "The Education and Employment of working-class girls, 1870-1914", 1988 for a discussion on working class education for girls.

(163) E Hopkins, How to Start Preventive Work, 1884, p28.

(164) These had been suggested by Mrs Ormiston Chant, a well known social purity worker, who had been present at the inaugural meeting of Summer Hill.

(165) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1907-1912.

(166) Swimming lessons were paid for by Miss Pugh and taught by Miss Miller. (BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1913-1914.)

(167) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(168) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1912.

(169) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1908-1914.

(170) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1903-1904.

(171) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1904-1908.

(172) Organising recreation for the working class was quite common. For instance, Lady Charlotte, in Wales, took her male workforce to the Great Exhibition of 1851. (A V John, "Our Mothers' Land", University of Wales Press, 1991.)

(173) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(174) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(175) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(176) See J Lown, "Not so much a factory, more a form of patriarchy: gender and class during industrialisation", in E Gamarnikow, Gender, Class and Work, Heinemann, 1983.

(177) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1901, p7.

(178) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1888-1904.

(179) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1894-1902.

(180) Hopkins had recommended the following:- "Box 4s6d; 2 Chemises 2s; 2 pairs of drawers 1s6d; 2 Flannel petticoats 5s; 1 Top petticoat 1s6d; 1 pair of stays 1s; 2 Nightdresses 2s 6d; 2 Print dresses 8s; 1 Stuff dress 6s; 4 Coarse aprons 2s3d; 4 White aprons 2s; 2 pair stockings 1s3d; 1 pair boots 6s; Hat 1s 6d; Jacket 6s; Pair of slippers 2s." (E Hopkins, How to Start Preventive Work, 1884, p12.)

(181) This outfit was either made by members of the Committee or cast off clothing from a donator. (BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.)

(182) Mistresses employing servants from Summer Hill had to sign a document agreeing to these conditions but there was no way in which these rules could be enforced by the institution.

(183) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(184) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1897, p6.

(185) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1887-1914.

(186) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1903, p6.

(187) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1889, p6.

(188) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1889, See also, J Hammerton, Emigrant Gentlewomen: Genteel Poverty and Female Emigration, 1830-1919, Croom Helm, 1979 for a discussion of the emigration of middle class women to the colonies.

(189) Ellice Hopkins encouraged young women to leave England for Canada, New Zealand or Australia. She believed that emigration would relieve England of the congestion of unmarried women which made women's labour cheap. The BLACPYG, however, only recommended emigration as a last resort.

(190) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1890, p5.

(191) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1894, p7.

(192) BLACPYG Annual Report, 1891.

Chapter Seven: The Girls' Night Shelter

The Girls' Night Shelter (GNS) was opened at 39, Bath Row 1888 to accommodate homeless young women for one or two nights.[1] In 1893 new premises were taken at 28, Bath Row and in 1905 the shelter moved to 9, Tennant Street,[2] near Islington Row, Birmingham.[3] It was a temporary refuge rather than a permanent institution like Mrs Roger's Memorial Home and Summer Hill.[4] The GNS was seen as an avenue of entrance and receiving station to either a reform home, or to employment not a casual sleeping place. It was perceived as a preventive institution which would act as a moral safety net against prostitution.[5] Without the help of the GNS "there would probably have been little before these girls but the life of the streets or the Workhouse".[6] The GNS, as with the other organisations previously examined, encapsulates the tensions and contradictions between female solidarity and class expectations.

Like the reform and other preventive organisations, the GNS was founded and managed by women committed to women's rights. It was also part of a national movement to help single women. In 1866 the Society for Organising Charitable Relief and Repressing Mendicity (later called the Charity Organisation Society <COS>) formed a Committee to consider the working of Night Refuges.[7] These refuges provided temporary accommodation to those who had been temporarily deprived of work and home:

> To furnish a temporary asylum...and to give them an opportunity of reinstating themselves in active, useful,

> respectable life, by providing them with clothes, tools, stock-in-trade, etc, and by making enquiry in their behalf for suitable employment, is the most obvious way of giving effect to the preventive and remedial principle.[8]

To some extent, the GNS embodied the principles and practices, not only of the COS but of the LACFG and the BLACPYG especially in relation to the definition of the deserving poor and in viewing working class women as victims.

Because the GNS published extracts from its case studies each year, it is possible to obtain some idea, not necessarily of the inmates themselves, but of how they were perceived. These images provide another example of how gender was constructed by class. Middle class women imposed a different definition of gender onto the women they saved than the one which they created for themselves. Middle class women viewed themselves as feminist activists capable of taking control but saw the destitute as casualties of working class society, as victims and as inadequates.[9] The philosophy of the GNS was not surprisingly similar to that of the LACFG and the BLACPYG.

There is no doubt that the GNS was concerned about the homelessness of young women. Language used in the case studies was highly emotive, melodramatic and somewhat sensational evoking a dismal picture of a wretched youngster left forlorn by parents, friends and relatives.[10] This style of writing reflected a particular gender and class based vicariousness more reminiscent of Stead's Pall Mall Gazette than Annual Reports of feminist institutions. The following examples demonstrate the

dramatisation of individual lives favoured by the GNS Committee:

> M -, age 16 came to us, having been told of the Shelter by some girls who had found her crying in the streets, her father dead, mother taken to drink, and gone on the streets. M - had worked in a factory, but work had been slack for some time, and she was in debt to the woman she lived with, who turned her out on that account.[11]
>
> It is pitiable to think of the state of this child - deserted by her only protector, when so weak as to be scarcely able to stand, wandering about in the street till between 4 and 5 in the morning.[12]

As the above case studies indicate, these young women were left destitute by the force of circumstance. This belief enabled middle class philanthropists to recast young working class women into ill-fated innocents who were at the mercy of wayward friends, unsympathetic parents, or intoxicated employers. Ill treated by irresponsible adults, they were perceived as victims. Through no fault of their own they had 'slid down the same slippery slope' as the women 'saved' by the LACFG and BLACPYG. Seen as poor creatures, the destitute needed to be pitied, helped and reformed by the champion of the poor: the managers of the GNS. Seeing women as victims reinforced notions of female passivity and dependency even when young women were patently not passive and dependent. Such women were viewed as children[13] who needed careful control and protection rather than as responsible adults. It is doubtful - although there is no evidence to substantiate this - that the GNS would have treated young homeless boys in quite the same way.[14]

Not every woman admitted fitted the category of victim. Some

arrived through the prison visiting of the Cadburys via the Discharged Prisoners Aid Society or kindred associations. Arrangements were made for prisoners to be met on the completion of their sentence when they were taken to the Shelter as a temporary stopgap.[15] Others had just missed their trains[16] and were brought or sent to the GNS by railway porters or policemen who had found them wandering about the station or the street.[17] The GNS was therefore responding to a local need: there was no other institution, save that of the workhouse, to which young women could seek help when they were destitute.

Nevertheless, homeless women were designated victims and thus remained part of the deserving poor. Homeless young women therefore fitted in with the class based philosophy of the GNS's precursor, the Charity Organisation Society, that only the deserving should be helped. It also reflected the policies and practices of the LACFG, the BMCVA and the BLACPYG which further suggests that whatever the gender composition of an organisation and whatever its practice each shared a common middle class philosophy.

The Committee did not intend the Shelter to become a 'tramp ward' so operated, like Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home and Summer Hill, selection criteria.[18] In the early years, access was certainly restricted to those judged to be deserving. The GNS excluded a proportion of young women: those who were drunk, had fits, were of weak intellect or who had proved in the past to be idle were not admitted. This selective approach was tinged with

humanitarianism. Those refused admission were often helped with food and money for lodgings and sent on their way.[19] By 1910, however, even this entrance policy was relaxed. (from 1906 rules were no longer printed) From this date, very few girls were ever sent away:

> We make no conditions and impose no restrictions, the fact that these poor girls are friendless is an all-sufficient passport.[20]

Thus, by the early twentieth century, the GNS had experienced a change in the type of young women who applied for shelter. This led to a shift in attitude towards the applicants: whether they were deserving or not they were accepted. Many of the later case studies reveal, and sometimes revel in, the desperate state of some who entered the shelter. Some were often in quite dire physical straits, dirty, unkempt and flea and lice ridden:

> we have had so many cases where all the girl's own clothing had to be burnt on admission, even where this was not so the girl had almost invariably to wash everything and must be clothed from our stores meantime.[21]

On entry to the Shelter women were, not surprisingly, cleansed. Reception procedures involved bathing, probably in carbolic, de-lousing and the destruction of their own clothing. "She was so dirty that all her hair had to be cut off and her clothes burnt."[22] This procedure, however, may have acted as a symbolic gesture as well as a practical solution to grime. Prospective inmates to the Shelter were also perceived to be the opposite of what ideal womanhood should physically represent - they were after all dirty and probably quite disgustingly smelly. Washing

and changing clothes not only cleaned them but marked a transition from one life to another. The freshly clothed and clean woman who emerged represented a new image of chastity and innocence. She had also gained a new identity which was socially acceptable and became the very model of what middle class women thought working class women should look like.[23]

It is impossible to estimate how many young women entered the GNS in such a state because Annual Reports only published a few of the case studies each year.[24] Furthermore, the GNS Committee may well have exaggerated the state of some of the applicants to the shelter because it reflected well upon their own humanitarianism. Nonetheless, the concern was constantly expressed that the GNS was in danger of being a tramp ward suggests that a fair number must have been utterly destitute.

In addition, a substantial minority of destitute women could not look after themselves because they were perceived to be mentally deficient. According to W A Potts, Honorary Physician to the National Association of the Feeble Minded, a large minority of GNS women were 'feeble-minded':[25]

> I came to the conclusion that about 30 percent of those admitted to the night shelter were feeble-minded.[26]

Despite a change in one element of their philosophy - the abandonment of the category 'deserving' - the GNS Committee remained bound by their class in other ways. Firstly, the GNS collaborated with the police. After consultation with the Chief

of Police it was agreed to keep the house open from 6am until 1am. If a young woman, however, was accompanied by a policeman she was allowed in whatever the hour.[27] There is therefore no doubt that the GNS was ready and willing, like the BMCVA, to use what is often perceived as repressive state instruments to encourage young women to seek refuge. That this same Police Force also had the power to arrest and detain these women was never mentioned by the GNS.

The fees charged by the GNS reflect a similar class philosophy. The GNS charged 3d for a bed, 2d for a meal plus the cost price of any garment purchased because it was feared the improvident might take advantage of their generosity:

> If all expenses were paid of board, lodging, and outfit, the "Council House" would not be large enough to receive the cases, for the idle and dishonest would impose upon the Charity to an unlimited extent.[28]

Such a policy must have deterred quite a number from seeking a (shared)[29] bed for the night, although the young women were able to pay the fees at a later date.[30] In addition, like other institutions set up to help single young women, the GNS did not wish the women to be a burden on the rates:

> When they looked at the figures in the reports, they saw that only fifteen out of the number of girls passing through the shelter found their way to the workhouse, and she ventured to say that if the shelter had not existed the majority of them would have been a burden to the rate-payers.[31]

There was a striking contrast here between, on the one hand,

seeing women as victims but on the other insisting that they be economically independent.

The middle class women who managed the GNS doubted the veracity of the working class women who entered. After admission the Matron and members of the Committee listened to the young woman's reasons for entering the GNS. This account was checked for accuracy which sometimes involved a great amount of correspondence with parents, friends or relatives. It seemed first of all that checking stories was a straightforward case of class prejudice just as it had been in Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home. However, many young women's accounts proved to be somewhat fanciful or downright lies. Women often gave false information concerning their relations, and it needed much patient sifting on the part of the Matron before the whole truth was revealed.[32] Verifying stories with others was probably a suitable precaution to take. What these case studies often show is rather rebellious young women far removed from the passive victims preferred by the Committee if Lily and Fanny were typical cases:

> Lily, aged 14 came at night, said that her parents were dead and that she had come from Halifax all of which was untrue. When her parents had been contacted they stated that she had stolen some money from her father and ran away.[33]

> Fanny, age 13 came in the pouring rain, said her parents were both dead, and the woman who took to her three years ago, had sent her out to sell fire-wood, when she returned the house was empty, and the woman gone. Gave two addresses, - our visitor was sent, and no such places were known. Her father came late at night, having heard from the Police that a child was here. Fanny had been stealing money from her mother, and given us a false name.[34]

The Shelter was not set up merely to give a night's lodging to those in need but to inculcate appropriate gender and class values "to help by counsel and advice to a better and purer way of life."[35] For obvious reasons the young women did not work inside the Shelter but they were still expected to participate in organised events. From 1902 Bible classes were held on Sunday afternoons by the Misses Vardy, Swinden, Lawrie and Davis. From 1903 on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, and from 1908 Monday evenings also, a different member of the Committee spent an hour reading to the young women whilst they sat and sewed.[36] In 1904 an Harmonium was purchased for communal singing.[37]

Food on offer at the Shelter was, as the Committee itself noted, not sufficiently nourishing::

> **Breakfast** Porridge, with not quite half-a-pint of milk, bread and sugar
> **Dinner** Vegetable and meat soups, Irish stew, meat pies, or bread and cheese.
> **Supper** tea or cocoa, bread and dripping or lard, sometimes butter[38]

Whether this diet changed over time is unknown because other diets were never published. Many of the young women who sought refuge in the Shelter were physically debilitated but this diet was certainly not nutritious enough to improve their health. The GNS Committee reasoned that such a poor diet was justified because the Shelter was temporary.[39] The limited diet may have also been acceptable to the GNS Committee because, like the workhouses, they wished to deter applicants. On the other hand, it may have been simply because finances could not run to a

nutritious diet. Whatever the reasoning behind such a poor diet one can only assume that the GNS held a rather negative attitude towards the inmates if they provided such low quality food. It was certainly not a diet to be found in most middle class homes of the neighbourhood.

Even though the GNS was a temporary refuge it provided an impressive after care service - at least on paper. Applicants to the GNS were either sent back to their parents or relatives, referred to another institution or found work. Once again, the GNS Committee were impelled by complex motives. They wanted to ensure that the young women were suitably cared for when they left the GNS but they wanted that care controlled. Consequently, the GNS used what seemed to be a strong women's local and national charitable network which was concerned with homeless young women. It established contacts with Homes in the neighbourhood and across the country. By 1908, for example, the GNS had established quite close links with the Salvation Army and many were sent to their Homes.[40] This networking may have been because the GNS shared a commitment to women or may have been because they experienced some difficulty in placing young women locally. The following extract illustrates both the lack of suitable Homes for discharged inmates as well as the desire of the Committee to reform them. It also exposes some of the tensions which existed between the various women's groups and suggests that female solidarity was perhaps based on fragile foundations.

> The Shelter' Committee are so often hindered in their attempt to help these young girls because there is so little preventive work being done in this city. There are plenty of Rescue Homes, doing splendid work, where girls who have fallen are received **free of cost**, and helped to retrieve their past - there is only one **Preventive Home** in Birmingham, and each girl taken there must be **paid for.** That is the Newhall Street Training Home.[41] If only there were more Training Homes on the same lines as Newhall Street where young girls who are only wayward could be sent **free of cost** and prevented from falling, we should not need so many rescue Homes, and we should benefit not only the young girls themselves, but future generations of this city.[42]

Destitute women were not seen as an homogeneous group. Like other institutions, the GNS categorised its applicants into those of good character and those who were not. Young women of 'good character' were sent to Bath House, 'A Home for Girls of Good Character' or to a Refuge or other suitable home. Homeless women were placed in Homes or Refuges annually, all of which meant a tremendous amount of correspondence for the Matron and Committee members. Once accepted into a Home, the GNS supplied outfits and railway passes for young women to travel, usually accompanied, to their chosen institution.[43] It is clear that the Committee did not trust young women to reach their destination alone possibly because they feared that they might abscond with the rail ticket.

The majority of the young women, if found to have a satisfactory character were sent directly into service. Each year, a large number of women were found employment. On the surface, the GNS appears little different to the Magdalen Asylum, Mrs Rogers' Home or Summer Hill. Each of these organisations wanted working class women to be cheap servants for a burgeoning middle class.

However, the difficulty of placing some of the GNS women into service contradicts this. Younger applicants were easily placed in homes while older ones "of more confirmed habits and less prepossessing appearance as though they are wanted by no-one"[44] were difficult to place. Some applicants were exceedingly incompetent, and only the forbearance of a tolerant mistress kept them in employment:

> Charlotte had no memory, when the family came down to breakfast they found the girl had laid the table for dinner by mistake.[45]

The GNS also retained contact after the ex-inmate was in employment. This after-care service was impressively humanitarian but again hedged with class ideas. On returning frequently to the GNS, the young woman might well have imbued the values of the organisation. The GNS was open to ex-inmates on Sundays and one day of the week. Many of the young women seemingly returned at week-ends, to go to church with the Matron, eat Sunday lunch or have afternoon tea.[46] Young women, such as Lizzie in 1890, visited the Shelter every Sunday and all her holidays. Even members of the GNS Committee recognised the tragedy involved in this. Rather than equate it with a happy home atmosphere, it was realised that it was indicative of despair.

> Indeed it is a touching proof of the friendlessness and absence of all home ties with the majority of them that the Shelter is always called HOME, and they return to call whenever they can on their holidays.[47]

As well as having an open house during the week, a Christmas

party was held each year for the old girls. At this event everyone received presents of clothing such as aprons, stockings and gloves from Christmas trees - useful apparel for respectable servants. An extra prize of a new dress was given to each girl who had kept her job for more than one year, thus strengthening the importance of a decent appearance, self respect and hard work.[48] It was therefore well worth the ex-inmates attending the Christmas party and about 74 did so annually.

For many, the Shelter, like other institutions, was the only home they had known. Adding up the attendance figures of all the organisations which held Christmas parties provides a sad testimony to prospective female homelessness in Birmingham in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The following extract sums up the despondency of some of the lives of destitute young women:

> Some of us who provide so many treats for our children at Xmas, hardly realise how small things give such great pleasure. One little desolate girl ....said 'We kept Christmas once' and when asked in what way, replied 'We had a big fire and all sat around'.[49]

From such an extract it could be deduced that destitute women were victims after all. However, not all of them passively - like the working class women in the other organisations discussed - either accepted the role given to them by the GNS or returned to the institution. A considerable number only stayed for one night and were then lost sight of even before enquiries could be made into their background. The GNS explained the short stay of young women by stressing that many had led wandering lives on canal

boats, caravans or had moved constantly from town to town before entering the Shelter. The Committee did not appear to mind that some used the Shelter as a temporary abode. "In many instances they are preventive, and but for the ever open door of 'The Shelter' we all know, 'What might have been'."[50]

Not all those who were found jobs were grateful and subservient. Some of the young women kept returning - it is impossible to discover whether this was of their own accord or because they had been dismissed - to the Shelter from their situations.[51] The response by the GNS to these miscreants reveals a similar mixture of kindness and control. It was recognised that for many young women, it was the first time they had slept under the same roof for more than one night. To settle down in domestic service meant a great amount of self control and a certain force of character to enable them to change the habits of a life time, and conform to the rules of the house in which they were placed.[52] Nevertheless, the GNS continued with its attempts to modify and change the behaviour of these women:

> We congratulate ourselves upon having got her comfortably settled, when she will perhaps leave the day after she gets here for the most trivial reasons. Sometimes after being talked to she can be persuaded to go back. Our Visitor will then go with her and intercede with her mistress to try her again. There are many discouraging entries in going through the cases of these 829 girls; such as 'ran away from her place in two days', 'went out taking some 'Shelter' garments with her, did not return'.[53]

Despite the problems of placing young women in domestic service, the GNS persevered and repeated its mistakes with each new

entrant. It either reflects an amazing naivete, an awareness that the Homes in Birmingham were not sufficient to cater for the number of destitute youngsters, or perhaps an unwillingness to send women to the workhouse because it cost the rate-payers too much or was deemed to be too harsh.

The last chapter in this section will examine the tensions between gender and class further - but with a new category of race added for analysing the homes for the 'feeble-minded.'

Notes and References

(1) The scheme to open a shelter was initiated in November 1887 at a meeting at Mrs Everitt's house in Frederick Road. (NUWW Quarterly Magazine, 1890, pp7-10.) The Shelter was opened in Bath Row by the Reverend Canon Wilkinson on June 18th 1888. Two other Reverends, J Hallowes and J Davis took part in the service of dedication. (GNS Annual Report, 1889, p4.) Twenty people, including Mr Wilson, Missionary to the Police, were present at the ceremony. Canon Wilkinson, Reverend Hallowes and Mr Wilson were all married to women who served on the Committee which suggests that men sometimes 'ably supported' their wives. Mrs Everitt was always associated with its foundation although she died in 1889. On her death the shelter might have closed but for the assistance of the BLACPYG. Fresh blood was injected in 1892 when a new Committee was formed consisting of members of the BLACPYG. Mrs Hallewell Rogers, a leading member of the BLACPYG, became Secretary and developed the GNS further. In its first year approximately 150 women were helped but after that upwards of 450 used the Shelter each year. (GNS Annual Reports, 1890-1914.)

(2) Because no suitable premises could be found, a new purpose built house was erected costing £1,000. This was achieved through the initiative and hard work of Mrs Rogers who vigorously campaigned for the money. It was opened on February 12th 1906 by the Rector of Birmingham, Canon Denton Thompson, Reverend J H Jowett and Reverend W G Whicker. (GNS Annual Report, 1906, p10.) The support of Canon Denton Thompson from the Asylum might suggest some rapprochement between the Anglicans and Nonconformists. Denton Thompson, however, eschewed traditional Anglican party politics and was known to enjoy good relationships with Nonconformists.

(3) In the 1960's the Shelter was still in operation at 27, Portland Road, Edgbaston for women, of all nationalities who had been made homeless or were destitute. Subscription lists still included the Cadburys, the Wilsons and the Wilkinsons whose ancestors had helped set it up.(GNS Annual Report, 1960.) It was later taken over by the Salvation Army and only closed in the early 1990's. (Oral evidence, Salvation Army officer, Heritage Centre, London, 1994.)

(4) The GNS remained the only shelter in Birmingham which was open day and night for young homeless women until 1895 when Roman Catholics set up their own institution, largely for Catholic young women. In 1903 a similar shelter was set up in Coleshill Street which dealt with young women from another side of the city. (GNS Annual Reports, 1896-1904.)

(5) Levine has pointed out that prostitution is the most obvious means of support for runaway young women in Florida, U.S.A. in the late twentieth century. (P Levine, Prostitution in Florida, Florida State University, 1988, pp57-58.) This may also be the case in England. The GNS - if modern day examples can be of use to understand the past - was therefore being realistic about homeless young women's future.

(6) NUWW Supplement, November 1903.

(7) Refuge and Reformatory Journal, January, 1867.

(8) Refuge and Reformatory Journal, January 1867.

(9) GNS Annual Reports, 1888-1914. See Chapter Two for a discussion of the political beliefs of the managers of the GNS.

(10) The language of the case studies contrasted sharply with the measured tone of the rest of the Annual Reports.

(11) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, September 1892, p19.

(12) GNS Annual Report, 1893, p6.

(13) Most of these women were young, either in their teens or early twenties. According to the 1891 Census, out of six young women, two were 15, one was 16, one 19, one 21 and one 25. (Census Returns, 1891.) In 1892 120 were under 19 and 61 were under 17, some of whom were as young as 13 or 14 years old. Two years later 117 were under 19 and 87 were under 17, many of whom were between 12-15 years old. (GNS Annual Reports, 1892-1894.)

(14) In June 1890 The Town Crier satirised the worthiness of the GNS. Not only would Birmingham need an extra staff of five or six hundred policemen, they argued, but men should also be targeted. "And why restrict the proposal to the weaker sex? There are plenty of young men, and old men for the matter of that, who lounge about the streets 'aimless', unless staring rudely at the ladies passing can be called an occupation." (The Town Crier,

June 7th, 1890, p3.)

(15) NUWW Annual Conference, 1890.

(16) Missing a train of course may have just been an excuse. There were other reasons, no doubt, why young women were loitering in railway stations.

(17) Posters were placed in railways stations by the GNS informing young women who had missed their trains or who were without money exactly where to go.(Birmingham Daily Post, October 31st, 1902.)

(18) GNS Annual Reports, 1888-1914.

(19) GNS Annual Reports, 1888-1910.

(20) GNS Annual Report, 1910, p13.

(21) GNS Annual Report, 1908, p4.

(22) GNS Annual Report, 1909, p8.

(23) Of course, many of the poor liked to be clean but did not have the facilities. See F M L Thompson, "Social Control in Victorian Britain", 1981, p196 for a discussion of this.

(24) Very few homeless young women used the Shelter if the 1891 Census is indicative of numbers. On the night of the census in 1891 only six women stayed overnight in the Shelter.

(25) Homes for the 'feeble-minded' will be the subject of the next chapter but it is worth noting here that Dr Potts was a well known eugenist who favoured detention for the 'feeble-minded'.

(26) W A Potts giving evidence to the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded, 1908, p470.

(27) Birmingham Daily Post, November 24th 1905, p3.

(28) GNS Annual Report, 1888, p6.

(29) Until 1895 applicants shared a double bed. In 1895 these beds were changed and single beds brought in.(GNS Annual Report, 1895.)

(30) There was no explanation as to how future payment could be made. (GNS Annual Reports, 1888-1914.)

(31) Mrs Ashford, Birmingham Daily Post, June 8th 1894, p3.

(32) GNS Annual Reports, 1888-1914.

(33) GNS Annual Report, 1903, p8.

(34) GNS Annual Report, 1904, p9.

(35) GNS Annual Report, 1889, p3.

(36) GNS Annual Report, 1906, p7.

(37) GNS Annual Report, 1904, p7.

(38) GNS Annual Report, 1889, p3.

(39) The diet was justified because it was argued that the shelter was not a 'Home' in which women remained long and worked hard. If it was then the diet would not be sufficient.(GNS Annual Report, 1889, p3.)

(40) GNS Annual Report, 1908, p14.

(41) This was Summer Hill.

(42) GNS Annual Report, 1911, p7.

(43) GNS Annual Reports, 1888-1914.

(44) GNS Annual Report, 1894, p5.

(45) GNS Annual Report, 1902, p5. An elderly member of the NCW remembered her mother employing an untrained reformed prostitute. Apparently the penitent ex prostitute was hopeless but was allowed to continue in their employ because of the family's middle class liberal conscience. (Oral evidence, NCW, London 1993.)

(46) GNS Annual Reports constantly stress that many young women returned to the Shelter at the week-ends. It is not known how many actually visited. (GNS Annual Reports, 1888-1914.)

(47) GNS Annual Report, 1902, p7.

(48) GNS Annual Reports, 1888-1914.

(49) GNS Annual Report, 1902, p7.

(50) GNS Annual Report, 1903, pp11-12.

(51) GNS Annual Reports, 1888-1914.

(52) GNS Annual Report, 1898, p5.

(53) GNS Annual Report, 1890, p11.

Chapter Eight: Agatha Stacey Homes

The Agatha Stacey Homes (ASH) catered for small numbers of young women who were perceived to be 'feeble-minded.' ASH was initially known as the Laundry and Homes of Industry but was renamed in honour of its founder, Agatha Stacey, after her death in 1909. The first, called Arrowfield Top, was set up at Alvechurch, Worcester in 1892 and the second, called Enniskerry, at Knowle, Warwickshire in 1893.[1] Homes such as these were established throughout the country by feminists anxious that 'feeble-minded' young women could not cope alone.[2] Any potential unity between women, however, was undermined by a particularly powerful class and race[3] ideology. As with the other local charitable institutions, class ideology played a large role in the founding and development of ASH. For instance ASH was anxious about cost. It had an added concern. Eugenic fears about the degeneration of the national stock informed the debate about 'feeble-minded' young women. This local study charts the development of ASH and offers insights into the dynamic tensions between gender, class and 'race'.

ASH was part of a national women's network concerned to help ameliorate the lives of 'feeble-minded' young women in the 1890's. Until the age of 16, orphaned girls were brought up in either a workhouse, an orphanage or a certified industrial school. Even special schools built in Birmingham to cope with the mentally retarded discharged young women at 16 into the

'community'.[4] It was feared that, because 'feeble-minded' young women had been brought up in seclusion, they were unable to face "a world which contains not a few of those who will send the weakest to the wall, without a tinge of compunction".[5] Such young women often became homeless, unemployable or prostitutes:

> Of cases actually seen in Birmingham I may refer to L.C., aged twenty four, whom I knew well in the Magdalen Home as feeble minded; owing to her weak mental condition she was kept there six months longer than the usual two years. Some months after her discharge I came across her in another Home. Two years later I found her in the night shelter. I then ascertained that she had stayed eighteen months in the second institution. She left it to go to a situation, where she remained five months; then she went to a fish shop and stayed fourteen days; after that she got another situation as a servant and stayed three months. Then she was brought to the night shelter.[6]

Various national groups and organisations, predominantly of women, became concerned about the lack of provision for the 'feeble-minded'. In particular, women guardians and workhouse matrons were worried about the number of young women who - incarcerated in a workhouse orphanage for the first sixteen years of their life - had nowhere else to go. In order to assess the scale of the problem, eight women guardians sent a circular to all Workhouse Matrons in England and Wales, received 141 replies, of which 136 stated that their particular workhouse held women who were 'feeble-minded'.[7] Similarly, those organisations involved in the care of young people at risk, namely orphanages, refuges, the Girls' Friendly Society and Societies for Befriending Young Servants, expressed concern about the lack of provision for this sector of society.[8] In 1895, Mary Dendy, a member of Manchester's School Board, founded the National

Association for the Care of the Feeble-Minded to campaign for greater rights for the mentally handicapped.[9] All of these organisations tried to improve the position of the mentally retarded. Petitions were signed, papers read and published in an attempt to persuade the government to forcibly detain the 'feeble-minded'. These organisations wanted to amend the Act of Parliament, which enabled Boards of Guardians to send the blind, deaf and dumb to institutions, to include the 'feeble-minded'. Women Guardians, along with others, put pressure on the government to form the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded.[10] In the meantime, because the state appeared reluctant to implement these suggestions private philanthropy stepped in.[11]

The local impetus within Birmingham was also led by women and in particular by Agatha Stacey,[12] a Poor Law Guardian and committed campaigner for women's charities.[13] As was indicated in Chapter Two, a fairly vigorous and committed group of middle class women was able to take charge. The turning point is said to have arisen as a result of a speech made by Lady Cavendish at the NUWW Conference in Birmingham in 1890.[14] This speech inspired Agatha Stacey and others to set up the Laundry and Homes of Industry.[15] ASH was generated by a group of women activists, many of whom were members of the LACFG and/or BLACPYG and supported suffrage politics. A Committee, consisting of female workhouse visitors working with the Birmingham, King's Norton and the West Bromwich Unions, the Prison Gate Mission, the Girls' Night Shelter and the BLACPYG, was formed to investigate the problem and provide

solutions.[16] This commitment to 'feeble-minded' women could be seen to demonstrate female solidarity. Middle class women shared a concern that a vulnerable section of the female population had been rejected and dismissed by society.

Not all female benevolence, however, stemmed simply from altruism. Agatha Stacey and other women were also middle class and like women involved in other preventive organisations affected by middle class concerns and sometimes prejudices. 'Feeble-mindedness', for example, was a middle class social construct. The term 'feeble-minded' was first used by the COS in its evidence to the Royal Commission on the Blind and Deaf Idiots Act, 1886.[17] The (middle class) International Congress of Hygiene's Special Committee of 1891 considered that 2.75 out of a thousand were 'feeble-minded'. Defectives, according to (middle class) eugenists, were likely to be paupers, alcoholics or criminals[18] most of whom were seen to be working class. Prostitutes were also often classified as 'feeble-minded'.

A curious blend of class prejudices and beliefs about the weakness of women motivated ASH. There was certainly a strong economic motive for building the homes.[19] Concern was often expressed that ratepayers had to bear the cost of young 'feeble-minded' women incarcerated in either the workhouse, prison , or lock hospital because of improvidence, depravity or moral weakness.[20] In addition, ASH wanted to train the more capable of the 'feeble-minded' to take their own place in the

world.[21] ASH's were also located within well defined financial boundaries. Economic considerations sometimes seemed to be of greater importance than humanitarian concerns. Agatha Stacey Homes depended on charitable support, the earnings of the inmates and more importantly on the 5s per week (which rose to 8s 6d in 1910) paid by either the Board of Guardians or relatives towards the keep of the inmates.[22] Indeed, if the relative or Board of Guardian proved reluctant to pay, the inmate was discharged. This was no idle threat to persuade reluctant contributors to pay in advance. In 1895, for instance, a young woman was returned to the Board of Guardians because payment had been discontinued.[23] Consequently, it seemed as if humanitarianism was only offered if it could be afforded:[24]

> ...*as we cannot keep* anyone free of charge, *we have to deliver up the girl to her friends* or to the Board of Guardians when the payment ceases, whether she is fit or not to enter into ordinary domestic service. We have heard of some of these that they are struggling on in situations, some doing tolerably well, others doing badly; we have heard of others that they are in the workhouse, and of others that they are living with not very desirable relatives...this sum of £13 not only saves the young woman herself from evil and gives her as happy and useful a life as she is capable of, but it also saves the community to some extent from the multiplication of the feeble-minded.[25]

Mental deficiency was equated with moral deficiency, especially with regard to single mothers.[26] In fact, 'feeble-minded' women were considered both moral victim and moral criminal. Badly treated by men, these women in turn were both sad victims, a moral disgrace and an economic liability. Perhaps the potential sexuality of single women also posed a threat to marriage, home,

family and the fabric of society. It has been suggested that women who had borne an illegitimate child were often classified as 'feeble-minded'.[27] Showalter has suggested that such classification undermined the challenge that single mothers made to the concept of the unmarried virgin.[28] In a curious tautology, premarital sex was equated with 'feeble-mindedness' which in turn was associated with sexual incontinence. Sexual incontinence was thus seen as the antecedent of madness and therefore abnormal.[29] Female sexual deviants were viewed as being psychologically unstable. Equating premarital sexual activity with 'feeble-mindedness', of course, kept the relationship between purity and femininity intact and contained the potential menace to society. Incarcerated, hidden away and forgotten, such women paid a heavy penalty for challenging middle class gendered behavioural norms.

Anxieties about moral standards amongst the mentally retarded certainly prompted the BLACPYG to support the foundation of Arrowfield Top and Enniskerry. Prostitution, in their minds, was linked inextricably with 'feeble-mindedness'.[30] 'Feeble-minded' girls allegedly populated the prisons,[31] workhouses and asylums. It was believed that mentally retarded young women were at greater moral risk than their 'normal' contemporaries because they had previously led such sheltered lives. Unscrupulous people, it was thought, took advantage of simple minded innocence.[32] As a result there was a differential birth rate between the normal and the subnormal. The mentally retarded young woman conceived and bore - often more than the national average

- children who proved to be a further burden on the rates.[33] Once fallen, 'feeble-minded' women allegedly entered the ranks of the prostitute. To some extent the following extract reflects the symbiotic relationship between economics and morality:

> Is it fair to the community, for a weak-minded girl to be able to go in and out of the Workhouse at pleasure, all her life, even after she has brought another feeble being into the world to be a burden upon our rates. She can go out at any time at 24 hours notice, and come back the next week to repeat the process ad lib. This system works nothing but harm to the girl himself, for she is sure to get into further trouble after the first fall, drifting from the maternity ward to the Lock ward, from the Lock ward to the Imbecile ward, from thence very quickly to the Lunatic Asylum, where, and this again is a notable fact, she costs the rate payer exactly double what she costs in the Workhouse, added to which we probably have to bring up two, three and often more of her illegitimate children.[34]

It was also believed that 'feeble-mindedness' - like unemployment, alcoholism, and criminality - was inherited.[35] 'Feeble-minded' young women allegedly became parents of children who themselves were 'feeble-minded'.[36] The belief that physical and mental limitations were handed on to a second generation lay at the heart of the desire to guard and protect such women:

> The prospective benefit to the community will be at once recognised if we could keep even a few of these semi-imbecile young women happy and contented in our homes, we should not only save them from falling into evil, but prevent them from propagating it in the form of dangerous and undesirable offspring.[37]

Eugenicist theories played a large part in this.[38] Mrs Pinsent,[39] a well known eugenist,[40] and other members of ASH feared a deterioration of the national stock. Influenced by the 'scientific'[41] emphasis on eugenics[42] ASH was alarmed that

retarded young women might bring future imbeciles into the world; that Britain, and Birmingham, might be overrun by a feeble, helpless and half-witted population; and that the child of a 'feeble-minded' parent might be one degree, at least, worse than the parent.[43] It was alleged, without any scientific evidence, that 70% of weak minded persons were accounted for by heredity. Underlying this was a dread that the middle classes would be swamped by those of an inferior breed[44] because of the latter's prodigious fecundity. This would, ultimately, lead to a degeneration of the whole race making Britain a nation of the unfit. Measures, it was argued, should be taken to ensure that the births of those who were unfit were restricted.[45] The eugenic solution to this problem was to detain and segregate 'feeble-minded' people to ensure that their fertility was controlled.[46] If young women were contained within one of the Homes then their capacity to breed would be greatly diminished:

> the result of the establishment of such Homes must be the diminution of the number of the half-idiotic children that are born into the world, and a consequent reduction of the poor rate.[47]

Agatha Stacey certainly held the same assumptions as Mary Dendy, supported enforced incarceration[48] of 'feeble-minded' women and campaigned to change the law to make detention compulsory.[49]

The practice of Agatha Stacey and her supporters was as contradictory as their theory. On the one hand, ASH provided care for a group which was often found incarcerated in workhouses or lunatic asylums. On the other hand, as with the other Homes

previously discussed, ASH operated within well defined class boundaries.

As the following aims and objectives indicate, Agatha Stacey and other Committee members believed that they were providing a humane shelter for those incapable of living independently. Certainly there was an equal concern that the inmates should contribute to the financial cost of the Home but this should not be allowed to undermine the contribution made by women to the care of the mentally handicapped. Theirs was a sympathetic hand which promoted self-respect and independence as well as economy:

> Objectives
>
> To provide safe, and if needful, permanent shelters for those women and girls who through weak intellect have no power of self-protection.
>
> To provide remunerative employment for such in laundry work and other suitable industries, whereby, with the addition of the annual payment made for each inmate, the expenses of the Home may be met.
>
> To awaken public interest and sympathy on behalf of these women and girls, and to give practical proof of what may be done for their welfare, by loving work among them in such sheltering Homes.
>
> Aims
>
> To make the Homes abodes of love and Christian influence, free from the cramping restraints of an Institution.
>
> To teach the inmates some branch of industry suited to their limited capacities, enabling them to earn part of their maintenance, thus fostering a spirit of self-help.
>
> To develop the feeling that they are all members of one family, and that they must work loyally for the common good, and for the welfare of the Home which shelters them.[50]

Three cottages at Arrowfield Top, Worcestershire, which had previously been a Convalescent Home for Children, were rented to provide accommodation. Similarly, Enniskerry which consisted of two villas with a small garden in front, a kitchen garden and a field[51] (which was used as a drying and recreation ground) were also rented.[52] The concern for the mentally retarded and the setting up of rather fine houses set in country districts[53] away from city neglect suggests that Agatha Stacey and her colleagues were motivated by humanitarianism as well as by class.

> The first aim is to make the new comer happy, to impress upon her that someone really cares for her, the second, to find out what power she has, and to interest her in using it, leading her on from the easiest kind of work to others requiring more skill and thought.[54]

Nonetheless, both gender and class expectations were still dominant. The classification of inmates reflected a preoccupation with stratification systems. A mental, and a moral scale was established to categorise the inmates of ASH.[55] 'Feeble-minded' people did not merit a certificate of insanity but neither were they capable of living independently:

> The expression 'feeble-mindedness' signifies a lesser degree of mental weakness than is generally understood by imbecility, and this in its turn is a step less than idiocy. There is a lack of reasoning power about them, although they sometimes show considerable sharpness and often have a good memory for events in their own or in their friends' lives. They lack the power of self-control, owing to an extraordinary feebleness of the will, and sometimes show an inability to appreciate the difference between right and wrong.[56]

Inmates were categorised not only mentally but also morally. ASH separated inmates into "pure minded and innocent young women"

and "young women who have had a first fall but are not depraved".[57] The first category was admitted to Arrowfield Top whereas the latter was assigned to Enniskerry.

Daily life revolved around work, rest and religion. Work aimed to teach both the 'fallen' and the innocent a useful craft to promote respect and self-help but, as with other reform and preventive institutions, it was framed within the window of gender and class. The work on offer could not have engendered the self-respect envisaged by ASH's aims and objectives. As the original name (Homes for Laundry) suggests laundry work was emphasised.[58] This type of work was the least skilled and most physically tiring of all domestic work.[59] It was also work done by reformed prostitutes. In the Magdalen asylums and reform Homes it was the work of those perceived to be morally deficient whereas in ASH it was the work of the mentally deficient, and in the case at Enniskerry, of both.[60] Other kinds of work were organised but only for those considered too physically weak to cope with the laundry.[61] The less vigorous work of knitting scouring and dish cloths was also offered even though many of the inmates found knitting difficult. Rug making, a much simpler occupation, was devised by Agatha Stacey to occupy the inmates.[62] Other work such as basket making, hand weaving was not considered practical work for mentally retarded women.[63]

> Here we saw one girl who has been two years at the home and has only just learnt to knit. The girls are never forced to continue any work which seems too hard for them, over and over again the knitting pins (which this poor girl could not hold properly when she came) were laid down and the work given up as hopeless, but the healthy

> emulation of the place stimulated her to fresh attempts, and the day she succeeded in knitting a floor cloth, which could be sold for the good of the home, was a proud one in her calendar.[64]

Life in the home was a blend of humanitarianism mixed with middle class perceptions of what was beneficial to working class women. Compassion merged with authority to produce a caring, yet rigidly disciplined, regime. As in the asylums, reform homes and training homes, privacy was rare. Every moment, either waking or sleeping, the young women confined in ASH were surrounded by others. The ASH Committee may have been proud that inmates had their own bed and washstand in a dormitory which was bright and had pictures on the wall but this only indicates the sadness of the latter's lives:

> Each girl has her own bed and washstand, there are pictures upon the walls, and signs everywhere of the loving thought and care which would make these afflicted, and too often forlorn and friendless ones realise that there is a cosy corner in the world, even for them.[65]

Recreational activities were also defined by gender and class. Physical exercise helped keep discipline and ensured good health. Every day, rug makers were expected to take a long walk in order to keep fit but this was not offered to the laundry workers, probably because they had enough physical exercise washing the laundry.[66] Skipping, Snap and Tiddly-winks were also offered.[67] Other leisure activities included Musical Drill which inmates apparently enjoyed. Inmates were also taught to read and write. On Sunday afternoons one of the members of the Committee gave a Bible lesson. Occasional outings and, in 1900 at Enniskerry only, social evenings supplemented these leisure pursuits.[68] At

Arrowfield inmates were sometimes allowed to go shopping at Redditch, which was four miles away, to spend their hard earned few pence. As in other institutions, the young women at ASH were not offered leisure activities usually defined as working class.[69]

Apparently, it was difficult to provide recreational facilities because of the short attention span of the inmates. However, it may be that the games organised for the inmates were unknown or disagreeable. As with Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home and Summer Hill, the games on offer were those often played in middle class house-holds. Inmates may well have been able to play other kinds of games associated with working class leisure pursuits:

> Suitable recreations and amusements prove a little difficult; some of the young women have to be taught how to play games.[70]

Discipline was strict. Obedience was enforced through a reward system. A penny a week pocket money - with the potential treat of spending it in the shops - was given for good behaviour. It was withdrawn if inmates 'wilfully' misbehaved.[71]

One performance indicator of ASH (only four inmates between 1892 and 1914 absconded) suggests a happy and well run institution. Consequently, there appeared to be no motive for running away:

> It has surprised some gentlemen to hear that none of the girls have attempted to run away; we should indeed have been disappointed if they had done so. They are all too happy to run away. When annoyed or vexed, they do sometimes talk of going back to their friends, but this is only a passing desire. The expression on some of their

> faces has quite altered, and the duller ones are becoming more intelligent. They are very affectionate and impulsive, and must be treated like children.[72]

This extract suggests that ASH's were a little more humanitarian than some other institutions. However, the inability of the inmates to take control over their lives may also have been a contributory factor. Furthermore these Homes were situated in country areas which made it difficult even for determined inmates to run away, or at least run away successfully:

> Restlessness frequently seems to attack them in the spring, and this year was no exception to the rule, the result being that we had to ask the lady interested in the case, to remove one of the girls, who had only been with us for about a year. This girl was most systematic in her efforts, carried a road map about with her, tried to induce other girls to join in an attempt to run away, and was always doing her best to pack her belongings.[73]

Dissatisfaction was expressed in other ways. Annual Reports frequently refer to cases of restlessness, fits of frenzy, temper or insubordination. In severe cases the refractory inmates were discharged because they were seen to exert a negative influence on the other inmates.[74] Rebellion may have taken other forms. It was allegedly difficult to inculcate bourgeois social mores into mentally retarded young women because of their short attention span and lack of intellectual ability to comprehend abstract ideas but the behaviour outlined below may have as much to do with resistance as incapacity:

> The Lady who takes the Sunday Bible Class says that she finds they are only able to receive a very little instruction at a time, and that she does not attempt to set them hymns or texts to learn by heart, as she finds that if they succeed in committing them to memory they appear to miss the sense of the words they learn.[75]

One is therefore led to believe that the theory and practice of ASH was a mixture of humanitarianism and feminism, underpinned by a particular class, gender and 'racial' ideology. Hidden, not just from history, but from their own contemporary communities, ASH provides a complex example of the tensions between gender and class. Compassion was juxtaposed with economics to create a repressive ideology and practice. Well intentioned feminists, with their own political agenda, had sought to provide suitable 'homes' for 'feeble-minded' women but failed to transcend their own particular class and 'racial' ideologies.

Conclusion

This section on preventive work has demonstrated that whatever the gender composition of the preventive organisations all shared a common philosophy. The BMCVA differed little in ideological terms from the all female BLACPYG, the GNS and ASH which suggests that Nonconformist, Liberal expectations were of greater significance in the process and practice of moral reform than gender. Gender, however, was crucial in other respects. Expectations of appropriate gender behaviour informed the policies and practices of each organisation. As a consequence young working class women were recast into an appropriate domesticated feminine mode - based, of course, on middle class expectations. However, young women did not always adhere to the rules and regulations imposed upon them: some rebelled and

absconded. This, in turn, undermines the notion of female solidarity envisaged by many of the middle class women involved in these preventive organisations.

Gender also cannot be understood as an homogeneous concept. It was multi-faceted. Gender inter-related with, and was influenced, altered and transformed by, class and 'race'. Single mothers were given limited financial assistance and found jobs; wayward girls were trained as skilled domestic servants; the 'feeble-minded' were incarcerated as much to protect society as to help them; and the 'undeserving' were either abandoned or prosecuted. For working class women, whatever their needs, charitable help from any of these organisations must have been all too depressingly similar.

Furthermore, this section demonstrates the weakness of 'essentialist' theories. The feminists who participated in, and managed, these different organisations may have dreamed of female solidarity but their wishes remained unfulfilled. In reality, they were inhibited by a powerful class and 'racial' ideology which undermined their attempts at creating a united womanhood. In some ways, the only real unity between women was that imposed upon them by a domestic ideology.

Finally, the attractiveness of over-arching concepts in writing this thesis diminished in the light of the empirical evidence. In the last analysis, there was no last analysis. Neither gender nor class was the ultimate determining factor in the process of moral

reform from which all other categories flowed. Although gender, class, religion and 'race' may not have been of equal importance, combined together they informed the practice of preventive work in Birmingham.

Notes and references

(1) Enniskerry closed in 1926 and Arrowfield Top, which moved to Rednal in 1910 finally closed in 1948. (Kelly's Directory, 1914-1948.)

(2) By 1899, twelve homes had been built around the country. (ASH Annual Report, 1899, p6.

(3) For the most part, ASH used the term 'race' to mean the British nationality.

(4) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, June 1896, pp9-17.

(5) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, March 1892, p22.

(6) Dr Potts, Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble Minded, 1908, p471. Dr Potts was a well known eugenist, who was psychiatrist for the Birmingham Law Courts and who was known to visit the Magdalen Asylum and the Girls' Night Shelter.

(7) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, June 1896, p13. However, there was no specific date to the circular sent to women Guardians.

(8) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, June 1894, p17.

(9) P Hollis, Ladies Elect, Clarendon, 1989, p276.

(10) P Hollis, Ladies Elect, 1989, p277.

(11) Hollis has shown that most 'feeble-minded' women remained in workhouses until they were turned into hostels for the mentally handicapped in the 1930's. (P Hollis, Ladies Elect, 1989, pp276-9.) See also J Woodhouse, "Eugenics and the feeble-minded: the Parliamentary debates of 1912-1914", History of Education, 1992, Volume 11, Number 2, pp127-137 for a discussion of the campaigns to forcibly detain the 'feeble-minded'.

(12) Agatha Stacey was born in Tottenham, London in 1836 of a Quaker family. She moved to Birmingham in the 1870's and became involved in the Girls' Friendly Society and many other women's charities. In 1883, Agatha Stacey was elected Poor Law Guardian for the King's Norton Branch, a post she held for sixteen years.

Unlike many single women she was reelected in 1894 after the widening of the franchise. Agatha Stacey also served on the Committee of the Women's Guardian Society. See Appendix 1 for further details.

(13) Agatha Stacey and Mrs Pinsent, both from Birmingham, joined with Mary Dendy from Manchester in publicising the plight of the mentally handicapped at Poor Law Conferences. See P Hollis, Ladies Elect, 1989, p277 for further details.

(14) Edgbastonia, June 1893, pp86-87.

(15) NUWW Occasional Paper, February, 1910.

(16) Edgbastonia, June 1893, pp86-87.

(17) I am indebted to Dr Joyce Goodman for this reference.

(18) J Woodhouse, "Eugenics and the feeble-minded: the Parliamentary debates of 1912-1914", p127.

(19) Agatha Stacey did not wish Unions to establish homes because of the tendency for women in such homes to become institutionalised. (ASH Annual Reports, 1892-1914.)

(20) Paper read by Agatha Stacey, "On the Care of the Feeble-minded Paupers", to the London Charity Organisation Society, May 25th, 1891 and published in NUWW Quarterly Magazine, 1891, p87.

(21) NUWW Annual Conference, 1898.

(22) The money received from the Board of Guardians would not have been sufficient to keep the young women in the Home. Charitable donations were therefore crucial. There was a high staff-inmate ratio which increased salary bills. Consequently young women proved more costly to look after than in the workhouse. Nevertheless, because of charitable donations 'feeble-minded' young women were not such a burden on the rates.

(23) ASH Annual Report, 1895.

(24) ASH Annual Report, 1895, p11.

(25) ASH Annual Report, 1898, p7.

(26) See Chapter Six for a discussion of single mothers in workhouses. Agatha Stacey was a Poor Law Guardian for Kings Norton so had some responsibility for single mothers in her workhouse. It is not known whether she directed single mothers to her own Home.

(27) Rose Crompton, aged 89, from West Bromwich, was one such woman. She had spent most of her entire life in mental institutions as a result of an illegitimate birth. Under the Mental Deficiency Act, 1913, local authorities were able to

commit such women to life long servitude. (S Humphries, A Secret World of Sex, Sidgwick and Jackson, 1988, pp63-65.)

(28) E Showalter, The Female Malady, Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980, Virago, 1987, pp7-9.

(29) See J Woodhouse, "Eugenics and the feeble-minded: the Parliamentary debates of 1912-14", 1982, pp127-137 and E Showalter, The Female Malady, Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980, 1987 for a discussion of this.

(30) BLACPYG Annual Reports, 1890-1892.

(31) Mrs Hugh Pinsent in a speech to the Birmingham Ladies Literary and Debating Society, 1904-5 spoke of her concern that England's prisons were full of the 'feeble minded.'

(32) ASH Annual Reports, 1892-1914.

(33) J Woodhouse has suggested that 'feeble-minded' women had an allegedly high birth rate. (J Woodhouse, "Eugenics and the feeble-minded: the Parliamentary debates of 1912-14", 1982, p129.)

(34) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, 1894, p17.

(35) See J Woodhouse, "Eugenics and the feeble-minded: the Parliamentary debates of 1912-14", 1982, p129.

(36) Mary Dendy, NUWW Conference, 1902, p107. Agatha Stacey and the other Committee members of ASH worked with Mary Dendy.

(37) Agatha Stacey speaking at a Conference of women Poor Law Guardians, speech reported in Englishwoman's Review, April 15th, 1895, p111.

(38) See A Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood", History Workshop Journal, p19-22 for a discussion of the importance of eugenic theories with regard to motherhood. Davin has shown that the birth-rate was of national importance as the health of the nation rested on the health of the future population.

(39) Mrs Hugh Pinsent was a Committee Member of ASH and served on the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble Minded, 1908.

(40) J Woodhouse states that Mrs Pinsent was a notable eugenist. (J Woodhouse, "Eugenics and the feeble-minded: the Parliamentary debates of 1912-14", 1982, p130.)

(41) ASH, like most people influenced by eugenic theories, were unaware of Mendel's work on genetics which undermined Galton's theories. See A McLaren, Birth Control in Nineteenth Century England, 1978 for a discussion of this.

(42) Francis Galton's theories increased in popularity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1902 the Eugenics Education Society was founded. This believed that 'feeble-minded' people produced more children than normal people which would eventually threaten the whole British race. See L Bland, Banishing the Beast, English feminism and sexual morality, 1994, p218-228 for a discussion of eugenic theories in relation to feminism and G Searle, Eugenics and Politics in Britain, 1900-1914, Leyden, 1976 for a discussion of eugenic theories in general.

(43) Mary Dendy, NUWW Conference, 1902, p115.

(44) Middle class families, by this time were limiting the size of their families. See A McLaren, Birth Control in Nineteenth Century England, 1978 for a discussion of the fall in family size amongst the middle class and A Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood", 1978 for a discussion of the fear of racial degeneration.

(45) Galton believed that the inmates of prisons, hospitals and asylums were unfit to breed. See A McLaren, Birth Control in Nineteenth Century England, 1978.

(46) See L Bland, Banishing the Beast: English feminism and sexual morality, 1994, p236 for a discussion of the depth of the support for sterilisation of the feeble-minded.

(47) Agatha Stacey, talk to Council of the London Charity Organisation Society, May 25th 1891, reprinted in NUWW Quarterly Magazine, September 1891, p7.

(48) ASH, unlike many eugenicist organisations, never advocated compulsory sterilisation of the mentally handicapped.

(49) Many of her demands were met by the Mental Deficiency Act of 1913 which allowed for detention and segregation of the feeble minded. Agatha Stacey campaigned for the 1913 Act. (ASH Annual Reports, 1892-1913.)

(50) ASH Annual Reports, 1892-1914.

(51) ASH Annual Report 1899, p15.

(52) In the first few years only between 16-17 young women lived in each of the Homes. Over the years, largely as a result of extensions or moves, numbers gradually increased, by 1907, to 21 at Arrowfield and 30 at Enniskerry. Applications outnumbered places though these in later years were in decline. In the first few years there were about 200 applications annually but by 1907 this declined to 89. By 1913 only 70 applied but even so applicants outnumbered places available which perhaps suggests the limited care offered elsewhere. (ASH Annual Reports, 1892-1914.)

(53) This may have been because cities were associated with degeneracy. It may have been because ASH had a wide catchment area making geographical location less important for visitors. Some young women came from Birmingham and the surrounding areas like Cannock and Walsall. Other were drawn from Cheltenham, Bath, Halifax, Liverpool, Lancaster and London, mostly paid for by Board of Guardians. (ASH Annual Reports, 1892-1914.)

(54) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, 1896, p7.

(55) ASH classified the mentally handicapped into a. idiots b. imbeciles and c. feeble-minded. This title was applied to those young people who were perceived to be too mentally deficient to be properly educated or trained in an ordinary school or training home, who were not only below the average, but below the normal child, yet were neither 'idiots' or 'imbeciles'. (NUWW Conference, 1898.)

(56) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, 1896, p7.

(57) ASH Annual Reports, 1892-1914.

(58) Showalter shows that laundry work was recommended as therapy for female lunatics because it was an outlet for excess physical energy. (E Showalter, The Female Malady, Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980, 1987.)

(59) See Part Two for a discussion of the problematics of laundry work.

(60) ASH Annual Reports, 1892-1914.

(61) ASH Annual Reports, 1892-1914.

(62) Even so, volunteers, not the inmates, cut and hemmed the mats and cut the ragged ends of the wool to the required size. These rugs, when complete, were shown at the annual Home Arts and Industries Association at the Royal Albert Hall and the Church Congress at Bristol. (ASH Annual Reports, 1892-1914.)

(63) ASH Annual Reports, 1892-1914.

(64) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, 1895, p3.

(65) NUWW Quarterly Magazine, 1895, p3.

(66) ASH Annual Reports, 1892-1914.

(67) ASH Annual Report, 1899, p9.

(68) ASH Annual Reports, 1892-1914.

(69) ASH Annual Reports, 1892-1914.

(70) ASH Annual Report, 1899, p9.

(71) ASH Annual Reports, 1892-1914.

(72) ASH Annual Report, 1893, p9.

(73) ASH Annual Report, 1912, p11.

(74) ASH Annual Reports, 1892-1914.

(75) ASH Annual Report, 1894, p9.

PART FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has examined a number of Birmingham initiatives to reform prostitutes and eliminate prostitution. Although a wide range of sources was used, the majority tended to be official sources printed for public consumption. Furthermore, as the sources were written by middle class people, the narrative of the past was constructed through the perceptions of the individuals and groups who managed the process of reform and prevention rather than the women whom they tried to seek and save.

Despite the "imperfect and fragmentary evidence"[1] relating to the history of reform and prevention in Birmingham, it was suggested in the introduction that this thesis would make a contribution to history in four ways. Firstly it would enlarge our knowledge of reform and preventive organisations; secondly it would break new ground by providing the first empirical study of women involved in these organisations; thirdly it would offer a new perspective on the social history of Birmingham; and finally, it would demonstrate that gender was not the dominant category with which to understand reform and preventive work. As a consequence, other categories of analysis such as class and religion were to be employed. It also claimed that gender, class, religion and 'race' were not homogeneous categories but part of a complex categorical layer which must be understood relationally. These aims, it is believed, have largely been realised.

The first two conclusions are easily summarised. Whereas the

empirical research on reform and prevention has added a local dimension to the historiography, the charting of women only organisations has contributed a new area of study. In respect of the civic gospel it has offered a new dimension to an important aspect of Birmingham's political and religious life. But it was with the categories of gender, class, religion and 'race' that this thesis was primarily concerned.

After an historiographical overview which outlined the main developments in reform and preventive work, Part Two provided a contextual background to the rest of the study by analysing the various groups involved. It has shown that the category of gender framed much of the contemporary debate. For Nonconformist women, moral reform was inseparable from the wider political struggle for women's suffrage. Philanthropy helped such women gain the experience and expertise with which to engage in a wider political world. In so doing, middle class women achieved a certain degree of emancipation by participating in charitable work. They eroded, but did not fundamentally break, the gendered status quo of Victorian and Edwardian Birmingham because their work was conducted within well defined class boundaries.

It also maintained that although many feminists promoted an idealised picture of female solidarity, this was undermined, in distinct ways, by both religion and class. Women from Nonconformist backgrounds held similar political beliefs and a commitment to the civic gospel which helped create a shared female identity. This female identity did not transcend class or

religion for two main reasons: firstly any notion of a common sisterhood between women of similar class backgrounds was undermined by doctrinal differences. There was little evidence of women involved in the Anglican Magdalen Asylum and women involved in the Nonconformist LACFG ever working together. Secondly, there was almost no unity between benefactor and beneficiary because of class divisions. Middle class women, whether they were Nonconformist or Anglican, shared little community of interest with working class women. To a large extent, middle class women's freedom was enjoyed at the expense of a cheap labour force of female domestic servants. Such a class perspective was hardly conducive to female bonding. As a consequence, one is led to conclude that solidarity between women was fragile: the only real unity between the 'seeking' women and those who were 'saved' was that imposed by societal expectations of women's roles.

Class was found to be an equally important category with which to explore the motivations and practice of the people involved in reform and prevention. Patrician Vice Presidents and middle class managers were motivated differently. Class is as problematic as gender for there was found to be no one homogeneous middle class ideology in the nineteenth century, even within the city of Birmingham, but a set of, sometimes conflicting, intra-class ideologies. Many of these differences resulted from political and religious beliefs as Anglican aristocrats and clergy united in charitable competition against a Nonconformist middle class.

Religion, largely absent in the feminist historiography of reform and prevention, played a significant part in the framing of the debate in Birmingham. Religious categories were as fluid as those of gender and class. Although all the religious groups under discussion were Christian, there were considerable doctrinal and ideological differences between them. Birmingham religious groups varied from High Church Anglican to Quakers, resulting in various, often conflicting, attitudes towards moral reform. Religion, like class, was gendered. For instance, the civic gospel promulgated by Nonconformists took a different direction under women and was in effect, modified as a result. Women set up Homes and Shelters as preventive devices, attempted to curb 'sexual incontinence' and sought to promote moral behaviour. Reform and preventive work, however, was only one area in which women engaged with the civic gospel. A plethora of other organisations were founded by women in the late nineteenth century and those also contributed to the process of social reform in Birmingham. Research into these organisations has yet to be undertaken but they may well provide further insights into the relationship between gender, class and religion.

Part Three of this thesis contributed to the national debate about reform work. It demonstrated that the Magdalen Asylum in Birmingham was little different from those founded elsewhere in Britain, which suggests that there was an 'archipelago' of, at least, Anglican reform in the British Isles. By breaking new empirical ground in the examination of female managerial styles

of reform, this thesis offered an alternative model to the national pattern. Largely because working class women were regarded as victims rather than sinners by the LACFG, the punitive model of Anglican reform was replaced for one which was slightly less severe. The Nonconformist all female LACFG thus espoused a gentler model of reform than the narrower moral authoritarianism of the Magdalen Asylum. Nonetheless, this thesis maintained that women's managerial involvement was not characterised by a marked change in the theory and practice of moral politics. Women may have made a major difference to the ethos of reform institutions but they only had a minimal impact strategically. Reform work was thus modified but not transformed by women. Like the mixed gender Magdalen Asylum, the LACFG still subscribed to a domestication policy whereby working class women had their subordinate role reinforced. Consequently, one is led to conclude that the ideal of a shared sisterhood was fundamentally undermined. Indeed, even the small shift towards a more sympathetic model of reform may have had as much to do with religious factors as with gender.

The analysis of preventive organisations in Part Four has revealed a similar problematic. This research is the first to chart the practical preventive work of women, and the writer had expected to find radical differences between organisations managed by women and those run by men. However, the evidence suggested that there was little significant difference between the preventive organisations run by women and those managed by

mixed groups of women and men. Once again a shared class, political and religious framework may have accounted for the similarities between the organisations.

In many ways class undermined female solidarity. Time after time, working class women were categorised into the deserving and undeserving, a division consonant with the class ideology of Victorian and Edwardian Britain. This lack of unity between middle class and working class women suggests that the category of gender was of less significance than class or religion in preventive work than the writer originally supposed. However, it must be remembered that feminists worked within patriarchal and class parameters which were hard to break and that they nonetheless helped in the development of a social policy that ameliorated some of the worst excesses of an industrialising society. The Girls' Night Shelter and the Agatha Stacey Homes, for instance, were founded at a time when little attention was paid elsewhere to the homeless or the mentally deficient.

Religious belief was demonstrated to be of as great significance in preventive as in reform work. Nonconformist men and women who founded and managed the preventive organisations were inspired by the radical Christianity of the civic gospel. Religion was therefore seen to be an important category in understanding prevention. However, this was very much a local study of a city dominated by Nonconformity. The national pattern may well have been quite different. Until research is completed in areas in which middle class feminists of an Anglican or other persuasion

were engaged in reform and preventive work it will be difficult to assess the extent of religious influence with any great precision.[2]

It has been found that by the 1880's 'racial' theories also played a critical part in the shaping of preventive work. Fears that a worthier, intelligent and healthy middle class might be swamped by the inferior breed of the working class led to attempts to restrain 'feeble-minded' women in the Agatha Stacey Homes. Gender and class were therefore mediated by the further category of 'race'. Sexually active working class women had their liberty constrained by middle class women fearful of 'racial' degeneration.

Neither reform nor prevention achieved the aim of eliminating prostitution in Birmingham so other methods were tried. Under the aegis of the National Union of Women Workers education augmented and later replaced reform and preventive work. This organisation, which still exists in London under the name National Council of Women,[3] was managed by women from a similar economic, social and political milieu as the reform and preventive groups. Their history - and the further developments they initiated in reform and preventive work - is yet to be written and lies outside the scope of this thesis.

All the groups discussed in this thesis were located within a specific gendered, class, religious and cultural context. This multi-layered approach suggests that over-arching categories of

history do not satisfactorily explain the nuances and contradictions within moral reform politics. Neither gender, class, religion, nor race can be considered the ultimate determinants of history but this thesis has demonstrated how each category helped to shape the process of moral reform in Birmingham.

Afterword

I began this research as a radical feminist who anticipated finding evidence which would support my theory about the unity of women. In the last analysis, I had assumed that gender was the fundamental organising principle of reform and prevention work, and that it would have transcended class. During the research my theory was undermined by the evidence I encountered. I was forced to concede that class - and even more surprisingly religion and 'race' - also contributed to the process of moral reform. Gender had not become irrelevant but its primacy was no longer unquestionable. However , neither gender, class, religion nor 'race' could be viewed homogeneously or hierarchically as each category forged the links in a causal chain which helped me gain an understanding of reform and prevention in Birmingham. In this respect, this thesis has proved to be a personal odyssey as well as an historical exercise: interpretations, as Carr noted, should always be provisional.[4]

Notes and references

(1) A Marwick, "The Nature of History", 1991, p231.

(2) Research into areas in which there was a thriving LACFG not under Nonconformist leadership might yield quite different results.

(3) The National Council of Women is a woman's organisation, peopled by upper middle class women who campaign around educational issues. At the moment the AIDS crises looms large in their political vocabulary.

(4) E H Carr, What is History?, Macmillan, 1961, p24.

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APPENDIX 1

MEMBERSHIP OF THE VARIOUS CHARITABLE COMMITTEES[1]

a) Committee of the Magdalen Asylum

Reverend J Blissard: Vice President Asylum; helped found Charity Organisation Society; Rural Dean of Birmingham 1892; first Vicar of St Augustine's, Edgbaston; educated Cambridge.

Mrs Blissard: Vice President from 1902; wife of Reverend J Blissard.

Canon Bowlby: 1823-1894; member of White Cross Society, elected Birmingham School Board (minority candidate), temperance reformer, known philanthropist; Rector of St Philips, Birmingham; educated Wadham Oxford.

Mrs Phyllis Breay: Died 1870; husband Evangelical minister.

Mrs J U Caldicott: Ladies' Committee.

The Lords Calthorpe: Vice Presidents; Church of England; initially Liberal but later Conservative.

Mrs C B Cooper: Ladies' Committee.

Earl of Dartmouth: Vice President.

Reverend Diggle: Born 1847; described as an Evangelistic High Churchman with Broad Church tendencies; believed that poor relief and charity should not be given indiscriminately; educated Manchester Grammar and Oxford.

W H Dixon: Anglican; lived at The Beeches, Arthur Road, Edgbaston; coal merchant.

Edward Gem: Involved in Ear and Throat Hospital, Orthopaedic Hospital, Blind Asylum, interested in life of emancipated slaves; Conservative; merchant, Director of J Bagnall; Austro-Hungarian Vice Consul.

Mr W Goode: Committee.

Mrs W Goode: Ladies' Committee.

Earl Harrowby: Vice President 1861-1882.

Mr D S Hasluck: 1815-1893; one of the original founders of newly built Magdalen Asylum; Anglican; Company Director Metropolitan

Carriage Company, Aston Tramways, Dudley and District Bank.

Mrs D S Hasluck: Ladies' Committee, Asylum.

Reverend Healey: Vicar of St Thomas's, Coventry.

Reverend Hodson: Well known Evangelical.

Mr J Ingram: Committee.

Mrs Ingram: Ladies' Committee.

Mr N Lea: Related to George Lea.

Reverend George Lea: Born 1804-1883; leading Evangelical; Vicar St George's for 18 years; son of carpet manufacturer in Kidderminster; educated Cambridge; married Sophia Gurney, daughter of the late Baron Gurney in 1836.

Mrs Sophia Lea: Ladies' Committee; involved in education; married to Reverend George Lea.

Lord Leigh: Vice President, Asylum.

Bayley Marshall: Born 1850; Committee District Nursing Society; Freemason; draughtsman and consulting engineer; educated by George Dawson; mother first lady superintendent of District Nursing Society.

Reverend Parker: Vicar, St Peters, Birmingham.

Reverend Perowne: Evangelical; Vicar of St George's, Edgbaston; believed that Church should not be attached to one political party, concerned about the narrowness of views in some of the Birmingham churches.

Mrs Perowne: Ladies' Committee; set up Mothers Meetings and eventually took them over from BLACPYG.

Reverend Sharpe: Vicar at Perry Barr, Birmingham.

Lady Sawyer: Vice President; Conservative, ruling Councillor of the Ladywood Habitation of the Primrose League; Wife of Sir James Sawyer who was a landowner and Physician to Queen's Hospital Birmingham.

Richard Spooner: Conservative M.P.; father of Rev Spooner; related to Calthorpe's.

Reverend Spooner: Died 1884; involved in Deaf and Dumb School, Blind Institution; Vicar St George's Edgbaston; Conservative; son of Richard Spooner; related to Calthorpe's.

Reverend Canon Strange: Seen to be largely responsible for rescuscitating Magdalen Asylum; Diocesan Committee; White Cross

Society 1888, founder Church of England College for Girls, involved in NSPCC, member of Diocesan Temperance Society; Vicar, St Augustine's, Birmingham.

Lawrence Strange: Brother of Reverend Canon Strange.

Reverend Denton Thompson: Vicar, St Martins; an Evangelical of the Liberal school, believed in aggressive Christianity but apparently enjoyed good relationships with Nonconformists; born Liverpool; educated Cambridge.

Canon Wilkinson: Member of White Cross Society.

b) Committee of the Ladies' Association for the Care of Friendless Girls, the Birmingham Ladies' Association for the Care and Protection of Young Girls, the Girls' Night Shelter and Agatha Stacey Homes

Mrs Arthur Addinsell: Committee LACFG; subscribed to BMCVA.

Mrs George Stacey Albright: Executive GNS; subscribed to BMCVA; subscribed to Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage; Quaker; lived in Edgbaston; formerly Margaret Harrison, married 1883; related to Cadbury, Stacey and Wilson families, father in law active in anti-slavery movement.

Miss M D Albright: Committee GNS, Chair, ASH; Quaker; possibly niece of Mrs Albright, not daughter.

Mrs Ashford: Executive GNS, Committee ASH, member of Birmingham Ladies' Association for Useful Work; Executive BMCVA; subscribed to Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage (as did her husband); Poor Law Guardian; Quaker; Liberal, President of Women's Liberal Unionist Association, lived in Gough Road, Edgbaston; husband manufacturer, Ashford and Winder, Liberal Councillor for St Martin's Ward.

Mrs Beale: President BLACPYG from 1903; helped build hall of residence for women students at Birmingham University; Unitarian; formerly Alice Kenrick, sister to Joseph Chamberlain's second wife, and to Mrs Osler; Husband Lord Mayor three times 1898-1900, Solicitor, Chair of Watch Committee, Vice Chancellor University, Unitarian, Church of Messiah who came from a family which had long associations with philanthropy.

Mrs Bishop: Founder and Vice President, LACFG, Executive BLACPYG, GNS; Executive BMCVA; supported repeal of Contagious Diseases Acts and the Ladies' National Association; Baptist; lived in Carpenter Road, Edgbaston; married to C T Bishop, J.P., manufacturer, Liberal Councillor, Chair of Watch Committee who was interested in philanthropic works.

Mrs Bottomley: Executive LACFG; lived in Edgbaston.

Mrs Bracey: Committee BLACPYG; Poor Law Guardian.

Miss Brooks: Executive Committee BLACPYG, 1887-1901, Executive GNS; possibly daughter of Mrs Brooks.

Mrs Brooks: Died 1899; Treasurer, BLACPYG 1887-1900, Executive GNS; subscribed to BMCVA; subscribed to Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage; lived in Edgbaston.

Miss Elizabeth H Cadbury: 1832-1909, Committee LACFG, Executive BLACPYG 1892-circa 1898, Committee ASH, ran large Mothers' Meeting at Priory Rooms, taught for 40 years in Priory Adult School, President Women's Temperance Association; Executive BMCVA; Quaker who had a strong call for ministry in later years; Father Benjamin, Mother Candia both active in anti-slavery politics, great grandmother Hannah Wadkin, Manchester, well known philanthropist, five of her sisters also engaged in social welfare politics, sister Hannah Poor Law Guardian.

Mrs Barrow Cadbury: Committee LACFG, prison visitor for young children, gave Garden parties for Salvation Army Home, The Hawthornes; Quaker; lived in Edgbaston.

Mrs George Cadbury: 1858-1951; Executive Committee, BLACPYG, 1896-1911; leading member of NUWW, Chair of Rescue Conference, Glasgow, 1911; Executive and later President of BMCVA; Vice President of Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage; Quaker, Quaker Minister; Liberal, President North Worcesterhire Women's Liberal Association, Liberal (defeated) candidate for Kings Norton, 1913; formerly Elizabeth Taylor, attended London Collegiate School and sat Cambridge Local Exams, married George, an active philanthropist in 1888 and moved to Birmingham, step-mother to five children at marriage and bore six more between 1889-1906.

Miss Sarah Cadbury: 1836-1908; Committee LACFG, held Mothers' Meeting at Staniforth Street Hall, supported Women's Hospital, Friends Foreign Mission; Quaker; daughter of Benjamin Head Cadbury, sister to Elizabeth H; interested in similar work as Elizabeth H though did not appear to be so articulate or engaged in so many activities.

Mrs W A Cadbury: Committee LACFG.

Mrs Carnegie: Vice President BLACPYG, 1887-1905; lived at St Phillips Rectory, Birmingham; married to Canon Carnegie who was made Honorary Canon, 1905.

Mrs Eric Carter: Committee BLACPYG, Hon Gen Secretary ASH, joined Mothers' Union; subscribed to Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage; lived in Edgbaston.

Dr Annie Clarke: 1845-1924; Physician to Mrs Rogers' Memorial

Home; Executive BMCVA; first woman doctor in Birmingham - under the leadership of Sophia Jex Blake she went with 12 others to Ireland to study. They were the first group of women doctors after Elizabeth Garrett Anderson to be registered.

Mrs J B Clarke: Committee LACFG; lived in Sutton Coldfield.

Mrs R W Dale, Committee GNS, lectured on various subjects to women audiences; Council of BMCVA; subscribed to Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage; Nonconformist; Liberal; married to R W Dale, Carrs Lane Chapel.

Mrs F Everitt: Executive, GNS; formerly Hudson, married Allen Edward Everitt in 1880 who was an artist and honorary Curator Birmingham Art Gallery.

Mrs Hallowes: Committee LACFG, Secretary BLACPYG 1887-1889, resigned as Secretary because of home demands and wanted to devote more time to the Moral Educational Branch, Executive of GNS; lived in Edgbaston; married to Reverend Hallowes.

Mrs C A Harrison: Committee LACFG, Executive BLACPYG, Executive GNS, Committee member ASH; lived in Edgbaston; husband C A Harrison, Honorary Accountant BLACPYG.

Miss Edith Hopkins: Executive LACFG; lived in Edgbaston.

Mrs J Furneaux Jordan: Committee LACFG, Committee GNS; lived at Frederick Road, Edgbaston; Husband Professor of Surgery at Women's hospital who had written several articles on diseases of women and who subscribed to women's suffrage.

Mrs Eleanor Impey: 1846-1915; Executive Committee ASH; subscribed to BMCVA; forwarded the women's suffrage petition of 1875 to John Bright to present to House of Commons; Liberal, Vice President of Birmingham Women's Liberal Federation, parish Councillor for King's Norton; Quaker; lived in Edgbaston; daughter of shoe manufacturer and originator of Temperance Movement; educated Wilhelmina Taylor's boarding school at Frenchay, Bristol; husband Frederic, printer and dairy farmer, Liberal candidate for St Bartholomew's, 1888, five sons and two daughters.

Miss Impey: Treasurer LACFG, Edgbaston.

Mrs Margaret Kenway Littleboy: 1855-1912; Head of Workhouse branch BLACPYG; Quaker; married William 1887, Clerk to the Society of Friends, husband subscribed to BMCVA, no children.

Mrs Albright King: Executive GNS; signed Declaration in support of female suffrage; related to Mrs Albright.

Mrs Knox: President BLACPYG, 1896-1903; Anglican; married to Lord Bishop of Coventry who subscribed to Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage, was a member of Birmingham School Board and governer of Birmingham University.

Mrs E Henry Lee: Committee LACFG, Committee BLACPYG, Committee ASH; subscribed to Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage; solicitor's family, husband Liberal M.P..

Mrs T G Lee: Died 1905; Committee LACFG, Executive BMCVA; Unitarian; lived in Augustus Road, Edgbaston; husband solicitor, Liberal, philanthropist.

Anna Lloyd: 1837-1925; Committee BLACPYG; subscribed to Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage; Poor Law Guardian, lived in Hagley Road, Edgbaston; educated Girton (one of first students).

Mrs MacDonald: Vice President BLACPYG, 1887-1891; married to Reverend MacDonald, left BLACPYG when they both moved to London.

Miss Nunnerly: Committee LACFG, Editor Snowdrop magazine.

Mrs Osler: 1854-1924; Vice President BLACPYG 1896-1904, given Honorary M.A. Birmingham University for furthering the moral, intellectual and social welfare of women, lectured on hygiene and sanitation, supported repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts and the Ladies' National Association; leading suffrage activist; Nonconformist; Liberal, President of the Women's Auxiliary of the Liberal Association; came from radical family, her mother, Mrs William Taylor, had helped to form Birmingham branch of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies in 1868, had met J S Mill, Mazzini and John Bright as a child, sister to Mrs Beale and sister to Chamberlain's second wife, married A C Osler, Liberal,Vice President of Charity Organisation Society, Non-Conformist, friends with Dale, Vince, Dawson and Crosskey.

Mrs Arthur Phillp: (Helen) Executive BLACPYG 1896-circa 1901 when left for a remunerative post, Executive GNS, Committee ASH, joined Mothers' Union; subscribed to Birmingham Women's Suffrage.

Mrs Hugh Pinsent: Committee ASH; gave evidence to Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble Minded 1906; known eugenicist.

Mrs Arthur Rabone: Executive BLACPYG, 1898-circa 1914, Committee ASH; husband magistrate, manufacturer, ex-Colonel.(one of the Mrs Rabone's subscribed to Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage)

Mrs Harry Rabone: Executive Committee, BLACPYG 1896-circa 1911.

Mrs Barbara Rabone: Died 1920; Committee LACFG; Ladies Committee for Maternity Cases, delegate abroad for NUWW; Poor Law Guardian 1903-1912; husband M J Rabone.

Mrs Hallewell Rogers (later Lady Rogers): 1889-1894; Executive BLACPYG 1889-1894, Committee ASH, Secretary, GNS 1894-1908

until she died, President NUWW, Adult Cripples League, Blind Institute; Nonconformist, Member of Carr's Lane Chapel but later attended Edgbaston Parish Church, Church of England; lived in George Road, Edgbaston; husband son of Mrs Showell Rogers, Councillor Rogers, Liberal Unionist, Mayor 1902-3, later became M.P., carriage lamp manufacturer who subscribed to Birmingham Women's Suffrage.

Mrs Showell Rogers: 1832-1884; began rescue work 1876, Committee LACFG, involved in Sunday School work, Birmingham Education League, Committee Birmingham Hospital for Women; Honorary Secretary to Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage; Nonconformist, Church of the Redeemer; father Thomas Showell, husband property builder, Liberal Councillor, worked on Committee of Women's and Queen's Hospitals, St Josiah Mason's orphanage as well as other charitable works.

Mrs Rubery: Executive BLACPYG 1889-circa 1898, Delegate to Rescue Conferences; subscribed to BMCVA; donated to Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage.

Mrs W H Ryland: Committee BLACPYG, subscribed to Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage; solicitor's family.

Miss Mary Scott: 1852-1911; Lady Superintendent of Mrs Rogers' Memorial Home.

Mrs Sherbrooke Walker: Committee BLACPYG, Hon Sec Snowdrop Band; subscribed to Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage; Nonconformist; married to Reverend Sherbrooke Walker who belonged to BMCVA.

Lady Smith: Committee LACFG; subscribed to Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage; Liberal, President of Women's Unionist Association; husband Lord Mayor.

Mrs Sonnenschein: Executive BLACPYG, Hon Treasurer 1904-1911, greatly involved in Snowdrop League; Committee Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage; lived 30, Calthorpe Road, Edgbaston; possibly related to Professor Sonnenschiein at Birmingham University.

Miss Rachel Baker Southall: 1840-1929; Executive BLACPYG, 1889-1911, Committee ASH; subscribed to BMCVA; Quaker; lived at Sir Harry's Road, Edgbaston; apparently an attractive personality, inviting confidence.

Mrs Anna Strangman Southall: 1841-1912; Executive GNS, Committee BLACPYG; subscribed to BMCVA; subscribed to Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage; Quaker; lived in Edgbaston; married Alfred 1864, one of Birmingham's best known social workers, related to Cadbury's through marriage.

Miss Stacey: 1836-1909; Vice President BLACPYG 1887-1909, Executive GNS, founded and became Secretary to Homes for the

Feeble Minded which became ASH; Executive BMCVA; subscribed to Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage; Poor Law Guardian; originally Quaker but converted to C of E when came under the influence of Canon Morse but apparently reverted to Quakerism in old age; lived in Edgbaston to be near her two sisters, Mrs Albright and Mrs Wilson, friends with Miss Fleetwood.

Miss Stillwell: Executive GNS; signed Declaration in support of women's suffrage.

Mrs Ellen Clark Sturge: 1832-1919; Founder of LACFG, Executive GNS 1888-1914, Committee ASH, first woman on Birmingham School Board, supported Ladies' National Association; Executive BMCVA; subscribed to Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage; Quaker; lived at 26, Wellington Road, Edgbaston; married Charles Dickinson 1862, who was active in public and social work, particularly with young people, also involved in Monserrat Company which sought to give full employment to freed slaves.

Mrs Mary Weston Tangye: 1835-1905, lived in Edgbaston, Committee BLACPYG; subscribed to Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage; Quaker; lived in Edgbaston; married George 1862, manufacturer hydraulic tools Tangye Brothers, temperance reformer, had 8 children.

Miss Taylor: Committee BLACPYG 1887-1896, Secretary for BLACPYG 1896-1909, resigned due to ill-health; attended Meeting of Suffrage Movement 1883; may have been related to Mrs Osler or to Mrs George Cadbury whose maiden names were Taylor.

Mrs Darby-Weston: Committee BLACPYG; subscribed to Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage.

Mrs W B Vince: Committee BLACPYG, Executive GNS, 1894-1913; signed Declaration in support of female suffrage, subscribed to Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage; Nonconformist; married to Minister of Graham St Chapel.

Miss Mary Louisa Wilson: Executive BLACPYG; Quaker; daughter of Mrs Wilson (LAFYG), niece of Agatha Stacey, Quaker, Liberal family.

Mrs Catherine Stacey Wilson: 1826-1914; President LACFG for 33 years, ran Mothers' Meetings, President of Birmingham Ladies' Association, local branch of the Ladies' National Association for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts, involved in Bible Class for Quakers, Quakers' Foreign Mission; Quaker; lived at Wyddrington; educated Castlegate, York, learnt Hebrew, Greek, Shorthand and Botany from private tutor; married distant cousin John Edward 1857, had 8 children; husband, Albright and Wilson manufacturing firm, Magistrate, Mayor, Liberal County Councillor, on Board of General Hospital, Deaf and Dumb Institute, YMCA, Foreign and Home Mission, subscribed to Vigilance Association for the Defence of Personal Rights. Sister Rachel married to Arthur Albright.

Mrs Wilkinson: President BLACPYG, 1887-1895, Committee ASH, President GNS; married to Reverend Canon Wilkinson, St Patrick's Clergy House; left BLACPYG when she moved to Chiswick, London when husband appointed there.

Mrs Wiseman: Executive GNS; Married to Reverend F Luke Wiseman, Wesleyan Minister, ex Quaker.

c) Committee of the Birmingham and Midland Counties' Vigilance Association

Mrs W Ashford: Executive Committee. (see b.)

John E Baker: Born 1825: Executive Committee; taught at Severn St school, involved in the sanitation of the city, involved in Rubery Hill asylum; Poor Law Guardian who inspired the erection of new wards for aged women at workhouse, implemented and re-organised Vaccination programme; leading Quaker; business man; Mayor of Birmingham; admired John Ruskin; first wife died and re-married in 1879.

Mr C T Bishop: Executive Committee, (see b.)

Mrs C T Bishop: Executive Committee. (see b.)

Reverend J Jenkyn Brown: Executive Committee; member of Kings Norton Board School, interested in Mission work; Baptist Minister of Wycliffe Chapel.

Mrs J Jenkyn Brown: Executive Committee; wife of Reverend Jenkyn Brown.

Miss E H Cadbury: Executive Committee. (see b.)

George Cadbury: Quaker; manufacturer. (see b.)

R Cadbury: founded and was President BMCVA, supported Ladies' National Association for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts; Quaker; manufacturer, left wing Liberal.

Miss Annie Clark: Executive Committee. (see b.)

Mrs R W Dale: (see b.)

R F Martineau: 1831-1909; Involved in National Education League; Liberal councillor, Radical Liberal; bachelor; nephew of Harriet Martineau; merchant and brass founder.

H J Manton: Born 1835; Overseer of Poor; Poor Law Guardian, 1876; Nonconformist; Liberal; silver smith; Lord Mayor; son of Alderman Manton, influenced in public and charitable work by his father; wanted orphans to be disassociated from workhouse.

Miss A Stacey: Executive Committee (see b.)

Mrs C D Sturge: Executive Committee (see b.)

E L Tyndall: Involved in Temperance, Dissenting Charity School, Homoepathic Hospital, Ear and Throat Hospital; Unitarian, Church of the Saviour; Liberal; Edward Lant, solicitor, father friend of George Dawson.

J W Wilson: Involved in civic improvements, first Chair of Education Committee; paternalistic chemical manufacturer, who established private pension scheme for workers and provident society supported by weekly contributions from workforce and grants by firm to pay for sick pay and medical attendance and death grants; Quaker; Liberal Unionist but later Liberal; son of J E Wilson and Mrs Wilson.

Alderman White: Born 1820; Liberal candidate for St Mary's Ward; Temperance worker; Appointed Chair of Committee, 1875, to carry out Chamberlain's Improvement Scheme; Mayor 1882; J.P. 1884; printer and bookseller; educated Castle Street Academy.

Notes and References

(1) Compiled from the Annual Reports of the Magdalen Asylum, the LACFG, BLACPYG, GNS, ASH, Birmingham Society for Women's Suffrage, NUWW Quarterly Magazine, Edgbastonia, Birmingham Daily Gazette, Annual Monitor, Crockfords, family letters and family trees, photo albums, notes of members of Albright Family buried in Friends Burial Ground, Lists of Members of Friends Meeting House, biographies, newspaper cuttings.

It proved difficult to find any record of the women involved in the reform and prevention charities. Many women were initially located through their husbands through journals such as Edgbastonia. Once it was realised that a couple of women were suffrage supporters, it was possible to trace others through the Annual Reports of the Birmingham Women's Suffrage Society. The Shield provided information about the supporters of the LNA. The Quakers were traced through the Annual Monitor. Many women remain invisible.